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ABSTRACT

This summary provides results from the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey, administered to a representative sample of city and county police and sheriff's departments nationwide. Results indicate that the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs decreased from 51 percent in 1997 to 48 percent in 1998. About 780,200 gang members were active in 28,700 youth gangs in 1998, a decrease from 1997's rates of 816,000 and 30,500, respectively. Despite these declines, gangs remain a serious problem. Every city with a population of 250,000 or greater reported the presence of youth gangs, as they did in 1996 and 1997. The number of gang members increased 43 percent in rural counties from 1996-1998. In 1998, 60 percent of gang members were over age 17 years, and 92 percent were male. Most gangs reported using firearms in assault crimes. One-third of all gangs were drug gangs. Drug gangs were most prevalent in rural counties where 38 percent of gangs were found to be drug gangs, as compared to 35 percent in the large cities. Five appendixes include: 1998 National Youth Gang Survey form for representative and comparative samples, random sample selection methodology, jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs in 1998, and U.S. regions and divisions used for the survey. (Contains 20 references.) (SM)

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1998 NATIONAL YOUTH GANG SURVEY

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Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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OJJDP sponsors a broad array of research, program, and training initiatives to improve the juvenile justice system as a whole, as well as to benefit individual youth-serving agencies. These initiatives are carried out by seven components within OJJDP, described below.

Research and Program Development Division develops knowledge on national trends in juvenile delinquency; supports a program for data collection and information sharing that incorporates elements of statistical and systems development; identifies how delinquency develops and the best methods for its prevention, intervention, and treatment; and analyzes practices and trends in the juvenile justice system.

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State Relations and Assistance Division supports collaborative efforts by States to carry out the mandates of the JJDP Act by providing formula grant funds to States; furnishing technical assistance to States, local governments, and private agencies; and monitoring State compliance with the JJDP Act.

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The mission of OJJDP is to provide national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to juvenile offending and child victimization. OJJDP accomplishes its mission by supporting States, local communities, and tribal jurisdictions in their efforts to develop and implement effective, multidisciplinary prevention and intervention programs and improve the capacity of the juvenile justice system to protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and provide treatment and rehabilitative services tailored to the needs of individual juveniles and their families.

1998 National Youth Gang Survey

Summary

National Youth Gang Center

John J. Wilson, Acting Administrator
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

November 2000

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Responses to the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey were submitted voluntarily by law enforcement agencies throughout the country. Readers are cautioned against basing judgments on the nature or extent of the gang problem in a particular locality solely on the data presented here. Because of differing methodology, definitions, and sampling techniques, caution is also urged in making direct comparisons between these data and data obtained in other surveys.

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Foreword

The spread of youth gang activity across America has led to increased public concern. In 1995, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention launched a series of annual surveys to facilitate analysis of changes and trends in the nature of youth gangs and their activities.

The fourth in this series, the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey was administered by the National Youth Gang Center to a representative sample of city and county jurisdictions. To facilitate comparative analyses, the 1998 survey used the same sample as its 1996 and 1997 predecessors.

This Summary provides the results of the 1998 survey, which indicate that the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs decreased from the previous year, from 51 percent in 1997 to 48 percent in 1998. An estimated 780,200 gang members were active in 28,700 youth gangs in 1998, a decrease from the previous year's figures of 816,000 and 30,500, respectively. Despite these declines, and similar declines from 1996 to 1997, gangs remain a serious problem. For example, every city with a population of 250,000 or greater reported the presence of youth gangs, as they did in 1996 and 1997. In addition, the number of gang members increased 43 percent in rural counties from 1996 to 1998, as youth gang participation continued to spread beyond the confines of the Nation's major cities.

Awareness of such data is crucial to understanding the nature of America's gang problem and to successfully addressing it. The findings of the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey featured in this Summary should enhance our efforts to combat youth gangs.

John J. Wilson
Acting Administrator
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- The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, particularly staff from the Research and Program Development Division, for their support and guidance.
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Executive Summary

The 1995 National Youth Gang Survey was the first annual survey to examine youth gangs conducted by the National Youth Gang Center (NYGC). The sample for this pilot survey consisted of 4,120 law enforcement agencies and included many agencies that reported gang problems in previous surveys. Approximately 83 percent of the survey recipients responded. Although the 1995 survey was the most extensive national gang survey up to that time and provided valuable baseline data, it was not entirely representative of the Nation as a whole.

The 1996, 1997, and 1998 NYGC surveys were administered to a representative sample of U.S. city and county jurisdictions. The same jurisdictions were examined in the three surveys. The survey sample consisted of the following:

- All police departments serving cities with populations of 25,000 or more.
- All suburban county police and sheriff's departments.
- A randomly selected representative sample of police departments serving cities with populations between 2,500 and 24,999.
- A randomly selected representative sample of rural county police and sheriff's departments.

A total of 2,629 agencies responded to the survey in 1996, an 87-percent response rate (NYGC, 1999a). The response rate for the 1997 survey was 92 percent (NYGC, 1999b), and the response rate for 1998 was 88 percent. Nearly three-fourths (73.7 percent) of the universe of cities with populations of 25,000 or more surveyed each year responded to all three surveys, and 99.1 percent responded to one or more of the three surveys.

The results of the 1998 survey are presented in this Summary. Like the 1996 and 1997 surveys, the 1998 survey was designed to provide basic information on the severity and scope of youth gang problems and the characteristics of youth gangs in the United States. A common set of questions is asked in each survey or in alternate years. In addition, respondents are queried each year on special topics of interest to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. Questions asked in each survey include basic information such as number of gangs, number of gang members, and gang involvement in criminal activity. As in 1996, questions were asked in the 1998 survey regarding the demographic characteristics of gang members, including gender, age, and race/ethnicity. Special topics in the 1998 survey included the impact of gang-involved adults returning from prison, use of firearms in assaults, agency participation in interagency task forces, and youth gang characteristics.

Some key survey findings follow.

- In 1998, 48 percent of all respondents experienced gang activity, down about 3 percent from 1997 and about 5 percent from 1996, when 53 percent of all respondents reported active youth gangs.
- The modest decline between 1997 and 1998 in jurisdictions reporting gangs was 2 percent for large cities, 6 percent for suburban counties, 1 percent for small cities, and 3 percent for rural counties. Most of the nationwide decrease in jurisdictions reporting gangs occurred in large suburban counties (population of 250,000 or more).
- All cities with populations of 250,000 or more reported gangs in all 3 years (1996–98), and the percentage of respondents in cities with populations between 100,000 and 249,999 reporting gangs increased slightly from 1996 to 1998 (from 91 to 93 percent).
- In 1998, there were an estimated 28,700 gangs and 780,200 gang members active in the United States (down from an estimated 30,500 gangs and 816,000 gang members in 1997 and 31,000 gangs and 846,000 gang members in 1996). From 1996 to 1998, the estimated number of gangs and gang members in the United States decreased modestly (7 percent and 8 percent, respectively).
- The largest drop from 1996 to 1998 in the number of gangs occurred in suburban counties (–24 percent), followed by rural counties (–13 percent). The largest drop in the number of gang members occurred in suburban counties (–21 percent), followed by large cities (–6 percent).
- Counter to the nationwide trend for 1996 to 1998, the number of gang members increased 43 percent in rural counties and 3 percent in small cities.
- In 1998, most respondents (42 percent) believed their youth gang problem was "staying about the same," 28 percent believed the problem was "getting worse," and 30 percent believed it was "getting better." Compared with 1997 respondents, more 1998 respondents perceived that their gang problem was getting better. Nevertheless, more than two-thirds of 1998 respondents believed their gang problem was either staying about the same or getting worse.
- In 1998, respondents estimated that 60 percent of their gang members were adults (age 18 or older). This represents a significant shift from 1996 (the last time respondents were asked about gang member demographics), when respondents estimated that exactly one-half of gang members were adults. Thus, it appears that youth gangs may be aging.
- Nationally in 1998, 92 percent of gang members were male and 8 percent were female. A total of 171 jurisdictions reported female-dominated (more than 50 percent female) gangs. Female-dominated gangs represented 1.76 percent of all gangs.

- Nationally in 1998, 46 percent of all gang members were Hispanic, 34 percent were African American, 12 percent were Caucasian, 6 percent were Asian, and 2 percent were of other race/ethnicity. From 1996 to 1998, the proportion of Hispanic and Asian gang members increased slightly, and the proportion of Caucasian and African American gang members decreased slightly.

- Respondents estimated that more than one-third (36 percent) of their youth gangs had a significant mixture of two or more racial/ethnic groups. The largest proportion of these "mixed gangs" was in small cities, where they represented 54 percent of all gangs, and the smallest proportion was in large cities (32 percent).

- Respondents were asked to estimate the proportion of youth gang members who engaged in certain specific types of serious and/or violent crimes. The percentage of respondents reporting involvement of "most or all" gang members was largest for drug sales (27 percent), followed by larceny/theft (17 percent), burglary/breaking and entering (13 percent), aggravated assault (12 percent), motor vehicle theft (11 percent), and robbery (3 percent).

- Serious gang crimes are no longer confined to large cities. Gang member involvement in aggravated assault and robbery was greatest in large cities, but their involvement in motor vehicle theft, larceny/theft, and drug sales was greatest in suburban counties. Surprisingly, the largest proportion of gang members involved in burglary/breaking and entering was reported in rural counties, followed closely by suburban counties, then large cities. Gang members in small cities and rural counties also were extensively involved in drug sales and property crimes.

- Nationwide, more than one-half (53 percent) of respondents said gang members in their jurisdiction used firearms in assault crimes "often" or "sometimes." Only 16 percent said their gang members did not use firearms in conjunction with assaults. Firearms were used far more often in large cities and suburban counties than in small cities and rural counties. Even in rural counties, one-third of respondents said firearms were used often or sometimes.

- One-third (34 percent) of all youth gangs were drug gangs (i.e., gangs organized specifically for the purpose of trafficking in drugs). Unexpectedly, drug gangs were most prevalent in rural counties, where 38 percent of the youth gangs were said to be drug gangs. In the West, where gang drug trafficking has historically been viewed as very prevalent, drug gangs were less prevalent than in any other region (only 18 percent of all gangs).

- Respondents were asked how much their jurisdiction's youth gang problem has been affected in the past few years by the return of gang-involved adults from prison. The most common response was "somewhat." Nearly one-half (49 percent) said either "very much" or "somewhat." Suburban counties were most affected, and jurisdictions in the West reported a far greater

impact of gang-involved adults returning from prison than was reported by jurisdictions in other regions.

- Respondents in gang problem jurisdictions were asked whether their agency participated in a formal multiagency task force or collaborative effort that focused on youth gang problems as a major concern. About one-half (49 percent) of all respondents said yes. These were most prevalent in large cities across the country and in all types of jurisdictions in the West.
- Nearly all task forces involved only law enforcement and/or other criminal justice agencies. In 9 out of 10 cases, respondents reported linkage with another police or sheriff's department and some other criminal justice agency. The next most common participants in such task forces were some other government entity (43 percent) and schools (42 percent), followed by community-based organizations or citizen groups (only 19 percent).

Introduction

The 1998 National Youth Gang Survey is the fourth annual gang survey conducted by the National Youth Gang Center (NYGC). NYGC was created in 1995 through a cooperative agreement between the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Institute for Intergovernmental Research. The primary purpose of the survey is to assess the extent of the youth gang problem in communities throughout the United States.

The 1995 National Youth Gang Survey was the first annual survey to examine youth gangs conducted by NYGC. The sample for this survey consisted of 4,120 law enforcement agencies and included many agencies that reported gang problems in previous surveys.[1] Approximately 83 percent of the survey recipients responded. Of the responding agencies, 58 percent reported that youth gangs were active in their jurisdictions in 1995.

Although the 1995 survey was the most extensive national gang survey up to that time and provided valuable baseline data, it was not entirely representative of the Nation as a whole. It was a pilot study. The sample for the 1996 National Youth Gang Survey was constructed to be statistically representative and to present a more complete national picture of youth gang activity. The 1996, 1997, and 1998 National Youth Gang Surveys used the same sample, permitting comparative and trend analyses.

As in 1996 and 1997, the 1998 survey was sent to two sample groups:

- 3,018 law enforcement agencies that constituted a statistically representative sample (hereinafter referred to as the "representative sample").
- 1,951 additional law enforcement agencies that were surveyed in 1995 but were not included in the representative sample (hereinafter referred to as the "comparative sample").

Agencies in the representative sample for 1998 were asked questions regarding the extent of the gang problem in their jurisdiction, including the number of gangs and gang members and related demographic information. In addition, agencies were asked to comment on gang characteristics, gang drug sales, the level of crime committed by gang members, gang members' use of firearms in assaultive crimes, the extent to which adults returning from prison to the community affected the gang problem, the types of task forces/collaborative efforts created to address gang problems, and the perception of whether the gang problem in their jurisdiction was getting better or worse (the survey form is presented as appendix A). This sample included four subsets or area types: large cities (populations of 25,000 or more), small cities (populations between 2,500 and 24,999), suburban counties, and rural counties.[2]

The agencies included in the comparative sample for 1998 received an abbreviated questionnaire that asked only about the presence of gangs in 1998 and the number of gangs and gang members (the survey form is presented as appendix

The 1996, 1997, and 1998 National Youth Gang Surveys used the same sample, permitting comparative and trend analyses.

The representative sample for the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey included 3,018 police and sheriff's departments in four divisions grouped by area type.

B). This sample is not representative and, therefore, is not used for making inferences about agencies that were not surveyed; it is used only to make comparisons with the 1995 survey.

This Summary focuses solely on the 3,018 survey recipients included in the statistically representative sample, because the survey instrument was more comprehensive than that used with the comparative sample and the representative sample allows for extrapolation of the data.

Methodology

Survey sample

The representative sample for the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey included 3,018 police and sheriff's departments in four divisions grouped by area type:

- All police departments serving cities with populations of 25,000 or more (large cities).
- A randomly selected representative sample of police departments serving cities with populations between 2,500 and 24,999 (small cities).
- All suburban county police and sheriff's departments (suburban counties).
- A randomly selected representative sample of rural county police and sheriff's departments (rural counties).

The universe of large cities (1,216) and suburban counties (660) was included in the survey sample for two reasons. First, the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey revealed that gang activity in the United States is most often reported in jurisdictions with large populations. Second, previous research on gangs focused mostly on large population areas. Therefore, including areas with large populations in the survey allowed for comparisons with samples from previous surveys.

The random samples of small cities and rural counties were selected by using a formula developed by Cochran (1977, see appendix C). Implementation of the sampling method produced the following sample sizes: 399 jurisdictions from a total of 8,740 cities with populations between 2,500 and 25,000, identified by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, and 743 rural counties from a total of 2,356 included in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Crime in the United States, 1994: Uniform Crime Reports* (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1995).

The comparative sample of 1,951 police and sheriff's departments was composed of jurisdictions that were surveyed in 1995 but were not included in the 1996–98 representative sample. These jurisdictions will not be surveyed in future years.

Survey instructions specifically asked that sheriff's departments report only for their "unincorporated service area." Any contracted jurisdictions were excluded from the reporting. This was done in an effort to avoid sheriff's departments reporting for cities and towns within their county that were already in the survey sample. During the process of "cleaning" the data, whenever it was determined that the agency might have responded inappropriately (e.g., more gangs than gang members) or had included other jurisdictions in their responses, NYGC contacted the respondent and clarified the responses.

All jurisdictions included in the sample were cross-referenced with a Bureau of the Census database to determine accurate and current populations. Each jurisdiction was assigned a Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) Code generated by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. Each FIPS Code is unique and is linked to the most recent Bureau of the Census population estimates. The 1998 survey used population estimates for 1994 because they were the most current estimates available at the time the sample was developed.

Each city and town was assigned a FIPS Code that corresponded to the entire population of that area.[3] Counties were assigned populations for their unincorporated areas. FIPS Code language refers to the unincorporated area of a county as the "balance of" the county and excludes the populations of incorporated cities and towns within the county. A few counties do not have a "balance of" population because there are no cities or towns within the jurisdiction. In such cases, the jurisdiction was assigned the population of the entire county.

Response rate

In March 1999, surveys were mailed to agencies in both the representative and comparative samples. Surveys were addressed to the respondent from the previous year or to the chief of police or the sheriff. Within the first few months, the response rate was approximately 50 percent, with surveys being received either by mail or by fax (a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope and toll-free fax number were provided to each survey recipient). After followup calls were conducted, the response rate increased to 88 percent for the representative sample and 86 percent for the comparative sample. Response rates varied by area type for the representative sample (see figure 1).

After followup calls were conducted, the response rate increased to 88 percent for the representative sample and 86 percent for the comparative sample.

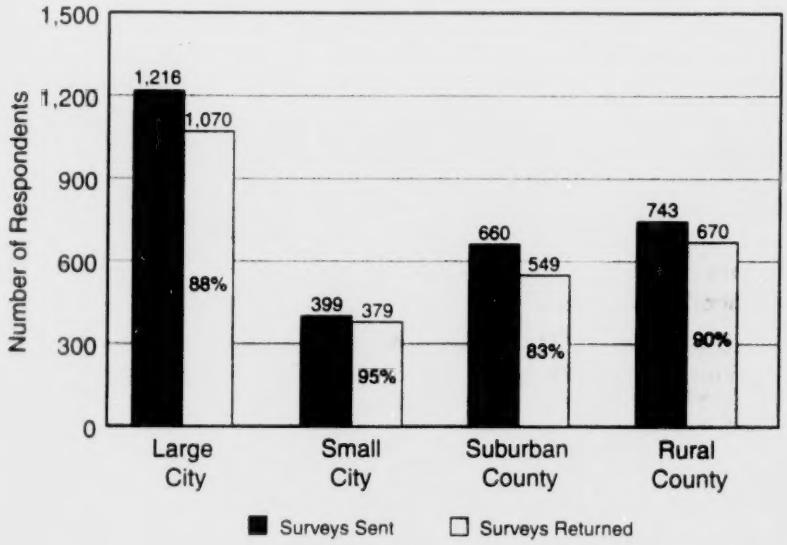
Extrapolation/Estimation

To provide the most accurate nationwide perspective of the extent of the gang problem, it was necessary to estimate:

- The number of jurisdictions with gangs.
- The number of gangs.
- The number of gang members.

Extrapolation for nonrespondents in large cities and suburban counties was necessary to produce the most accurate nationwide estimate possible.

Figure 1: Surveys Sent and Returned, by Area Type, 1998



Note: This figure and all following figures and tables are based on the representative sample.

To estimate the number of jurisdictions reporting gangs in each area type, the percentage of agencies reporting gangs was multiplied by the total number of jurisdictions included in the group from which the sample was derived.

Estimating the number of gangs and gang members for small cities and rural counties involved the following steps:

- Calculate the mean number of gangs and gang members for agencies responding either "yes" or "no" to the question regarding the number of gangs and gang members.
- Multiply the total number of jurisdictions from which the sample was derived by the percentage of agencies responding either "yes" or "no" to the question regarding the number of gangs and gang members.
- Multiply the product of step 2 by the mean calculated in step 1.

Extrapolation for nonrespondents in large cities and suburban counties was necessary to produce the most accurate nationwide estimate possible. Without extrapolation, the extent of gang activity in these areas would have been systematically underestimated. In addition, any change in the proportion of agencies responding for large cities and suburban counties in future surveys would likely have resulted in a commensurate change in the number of gangs and gang members for these areas, which could have led to a false conclusion that gang activity in these areas had increased or decreased.

To estimate the number of gangs and gang members for large cities and suburban counties, the arithmetic mean number of gangs and gang members per jurisdiction was calculated. These estimates were controlled for population by stratifying responding agencies in both area types into population groups (each based on a subsample of at least 40 agencies) and calculating a mean for each population group. The means by strata were used in lieu of missing data from nonrespondents.

Weighting percentages

In several instances, survey questions asked respondents to estimate the percentage of gangs or gang members who were involved in a particular activity or who met certain criteria. Specifically, this pertains to the questions regarding age, gender, race/ethnicity, drug gangs, and the analysis of an alternative definition of gangs. An important limitation to interpreting these types of responses is that these percentages do not reflect differences in the size (membership) of the gangs across the reporting jurisdictions. To account for this important factor, the percentages were weighted by the total number of gangs or gang members (whichever was appropriate) reported in each jurisdiction. Only the responses of agencies that reported an estimate of gangs or gang members (depending on the question) were used in this weighting procedure. This requirement decreased the number of agencies included in the analysis but increased the reliability of the translation of percentages into actual numbers of gangs or gang members.

Demographics

Respondents who reported gangs in 1998 were asked for specific demographic information: age, gender, and race/ethnicity (see appendix A). All responses were in the form of percentages. Demographic categories were defined as follows:

- **Age:** younger than 15, 15–17, 18–24, and older than 24.
- **Gender:** male and female.
- **Race/ethnicity:** African American, Hispanic, Caucasian, Asian, and other.

Gang activity within each demographic category was analyzed by area type and geographic region (as defined by *Crime in the United States, 1998: Uniform Crime Reports* (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1999); see appendix E).

Data limitations

Law enforcement agencies continue to be the best available and most widely used source of information for national gang surveys and other forms of criminal justice research. Criminal justice agencies usually are centrally organized and capable of developing systems for routine recordkeeping and reporting

Law enforcement agencies continue to be the best available and most widely used source of information for national gang surveys and other forms of criminal justice research.

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Definitions continue to pose problems for practitioners and researchers evaluating gang activity on a national level.

(Curry, 1995, 2000; Maxson, Klein, and Cunningham, 1993). However, law enforcement data have some important limitations.

First, many agencies do not collect data in a standardized manner. Databases, automated or otherwise, are becoming more widespread but are more commonly used for gathering information than for recording crime. In addition, the accuracy of responses in most surveys of law enforcement agencies often varies across jurisdictions, because responses are generally based on estimates. For this survey, instructions specifically asked respondents to base answers on records or personal knowledge. The previous (1997) survey asked respondents for their sources of information. The majority of 1997 respondents (53 percent) said they used both official records and estimates, 44 percent indicated they reported only estimates, and only 2 percent indicated they derived their responses solely from official records.

Second, responses to survey questions likely were influenced by the respondents' perceptions of gangs in their jurisdiction. Each year, the survey is directed to the most recent previous respondent. If there has never been a response from the agency, the survey is directed to the chief of police or sheriff. Unfortunately, it is difficult to ensure that the same respondent or even the most appropriate official receives and responds to the survey. As a result, a number of different perceptions and opinions may be reflected in the responses of some jurisdictions. Political considerations also may affect responses, and a gang problem may be either denied or exaggerated (Curry, 1995).

Definitions continue to pose problems for practitioners and researchers evaluating gang activity on a national level. Little agreement has been reached on what constitutes a gang, gang member, or gang incident, despite efforts to gain a consensus (Spergel and Bobrowski, 1989). In light of these problems, the current survey did not seek to define gang terms narrowly. The survey defined a youth gang as "a group of youths or young adults in [the respondent's] jurisdiction that [the respondent] or other responsible persons in [the respondent's] agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a 'gang.'" Respondents were asked to exclude motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, and exclusively adult gangs.

In an effort to address definitional issues, the survey questioned respondents about how their agencies defined youth gang crime and what characteristics they considered important in defining a youth gang. The survey also offered respondents an alternative to the definition mentioned in the preceding paragraph and asked what percentage of gangs in their jurisdiction would fall within the alternative definition.

Survey Results

Prevalence of youth gangs

Forty-eight percent of survey respondents indicated that they had active youth gangs in their jurisdictions in 1998. Figure 2 illustrates the proportion of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs, by area type. Seventy percent of large cities reported active youth gangs in 1998, followed by 50 percent of suburban counties, 32 percent of small cities, and 21 percent of rural counties (see appendix D for a list of all jurisdictions reporting gangs in 1998, by area type).

Table 1 shows the percentages of respondents reporting active youth gangs for 1996, 1997, and 1998, by area type. For each area type, there has been a modest

Forty-eight percent of survey respondents indicated that they had active youth gangs in their jurisdictions in 1998.

Figure 2: Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs, by Area Type, 1998

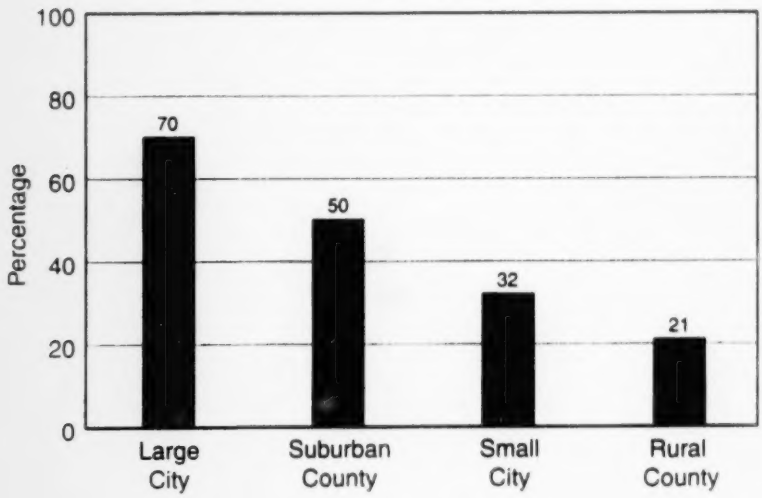

Table 1: Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs, by Area Type, 1996, 1997, and 1998

Area Type	1996	1997	1998
Large city	74%	72%	70%
Small city	34	33	32
Suburban county	57	56	50
Rural county	25	24	21
Overall	53	51	48

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Youth gang activity varied substantially by region of the country in 1998.

3-year downward trend in the percentage of jurisdictions reporting gangs. The largest decrease occurred in suburban counties, down from 57 percent in 1996 to 50 percent in 1998.

Youth gang activity varied substantially by region of the country in 1998 (see figure 3). The West, which has historically experienced significant gang problems, had the highest percentage of jurisdictions reporting gang activity in 1998 (72 percent). Youth gang activity was reported by 48 percent of jurisdictions in both the Midwest and the South and by 29 percent of jurisdictions in the Northeast.

Table 2 compares the percentage of respondents reporting gangs, by region, for 1996, 1997, and 1998. In each region, there has been a modest downward trend since 1996. The largest decreases from 1996 to 1998 occurred in the Midwest and Northeast: each dropped by 6 percentage points.

Figure 3: Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs, by Region, 1998

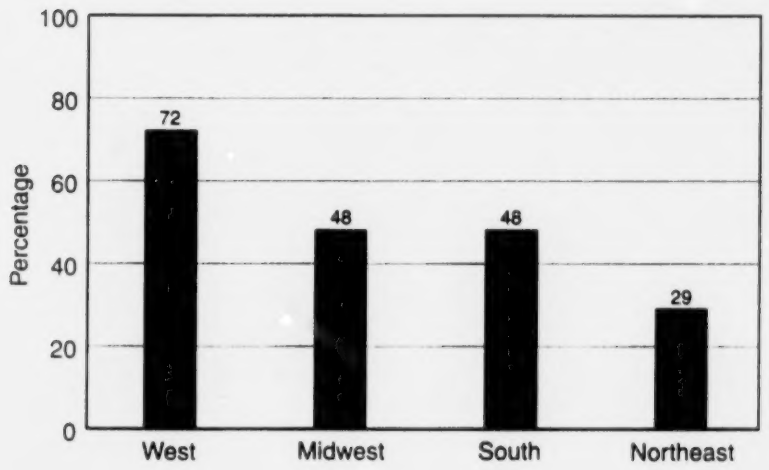


Table 2: Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs, by Region, 1996, 1997, and 1998

Region	1996	1997	1998
Midwest	54%	52%	48%
Northeast	35	31	29
South	50	49	48
West	75	74	72
Overall	53	51	48

Each geographic region can be further divided into smaller increments called divisions (see appendix E). Table 3 illustrates the percentages of agencies reporting active youth gangs in 1996, 1997, and 1998, by division. In 1998, divisions in the West had the highest percentage of agencies reporting active youth gangs, especially in the Pacific division (79 percent), which includes Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington. Divisions in the Northeast had the lowest percentage of agencies reporting active youth gangs.

Table 3: Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs, by Division, 1996, 1997, and 1998

Division	1996	1997	1998
Midwest			
East North Central	63%	61%	57%
West North Central	42	39	35
Northeast			
New England	44	38	35
Middle Atlantic	29	26	26
South			
South Atlantic	53	49	47
East South Central	43	48	42
West South Central	52	51	48
West			
Mountain	64	64	62
Pacific	82	80	79
Overall	53	51	48

Divisions in the Northeast had the lowest percentage of agencies reporting active youth gangs.

With one exception, reporting trends at the division level followed the national and regional trend of decreased gang activity over the past 3 survey years. The exception is the East South Central division (Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee), where the percentage of jurisdictions reporting gangs increased between 1996 and 1997 and then decreased from 1997 to 1998.

Tables 4–7 show the percentage of jurisdictions reporting gang problems from 1996 to 1998, by population size, within each area type: large cities (table 4), small cities (table 5), suburban counties (table 6), and rural counties (table 7). Within population categories, the percentage of jurisdictions reporting youth gangs generally decreased over the 3-year period, but there were exceptions to this trend in each population category. Among large cities, only jurisdictions in the 25,000–49,999 population range indicated a consistent decline in reported gang problems over the 3-year period (table 4). In large cities with populations between 100,000 and 249,999, the percentage of respondents reporting gangs increased slightly in 1997 and 1998. Neither of the two population categories of small cities reported a consistent decline from year to year (table 5). In small

Table 4: Percentage of Large Cities Reporting Active Youth Gangs, by Population Size, 1996, 1997, and 1998

Population Size	1996	1997	1998
250,000 or more	100%	100%	100%
100,000–249,999	91	92	93
50,000–99,999	80	81	76
25,000–49,999	64	59	58
Overall	74	72	70

Table 5: Percentage of Small Cities Reporting Active Youth Gangs, by Population Size, 1996, 1997, and 1998

Population Size	1996	1997	1998
10,000–24,999	43%	41%	43%
2,500–9,999	30	30	27
Overall	34	33	32

Table 6: Percentage of Suburban Counties Reporting Active Youth Gangs, by Population Size, 1996, 1997, and 1998

Population Size	1996	1997	1998
250,000 or more	90%	80%	81%
100,000–249,999	74	76	74
50,000–99,999	66	67	62
25,000–49,999	46	47	38
10,000–24,999	45	41	33
Less than 10,000	31	42	32
Overall	57	56	50

Table 7: Percentage of Rural Counties Reporting Active Youth Gangs, by Population Size, 1996, 1997, and 1998

Population Size	1996	1997	1998
50,000–99,999	41%	38%	31%
25,000–49,999	39	38	41
10,000–24,999	32	29	31
Less than 10,000	19	18	12
Overall	25	24	21

cities with populations between 10,000 and 24,999, the percentage of respondents reporting gangs decreased between 1996 and 1997, then returned to 1996 levels in 1998. Among suburban counties, only those with populations between 10,000 and 24,999 reported a consistent decline (table 6). The percentage of the largest suburban counties (populations of 250,000 or more) reporting gangs showed a dramatic decrease from 1996 to 1997, then increased slightly in 1998. Finally, two of the rural county population groups (50,000–99,999 and less than 10,000) reported consistent declines from year to year (table 7). Inspection of these tables suggests that most of the modest nationwide decrease in reported gang problems from 1996 to 1998 occurred in the largest suburban counties.

In 1998, it was estimated that 4,463 U.S. cities and counties experienced gang activity.

Number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs

Prior to the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey, the highest recorded number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs was 282 in 1994 (Curry, Ball, and Decker, 1996a, b, c). However, most surveys prior to 1995 were limited in size and scope and did not include counties. Results of the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey indicated that 2,007 cities and counties had active youth gangs in 1995. This survey sample was much larger than samples in previous surveys and included more than 4,000 law enforcement agencies. However, only jurisdictions that reported gang problems in previous surveys were included. Therefore, the estimated number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs was much higher in 1995 than in 1994 or other previous estimates.

Despite the comprehensiveness of the 1995 survey sample, it was not statistically representative; thus, the data could not be extrapolated for jurisdictions that either did not respond to the survey or were not included in the sample. Therefore, a statistically representative sample was created and used for subsequent surveys.

In 1998, it was estimated that 4,463 U.S. cities and counties experienced gang activity, down about 5 percent from 4,712 in 1997 and down about 7.5 percent from 4,824 in 1996. Table 8 shows that the estimated number of jurisdictions with gangs decreased in all area types from 1996 to 1997, and both the reported and estimated number decreased in all area types from 1997 to 1998. The decrease in the estimated number of jurisdictions reporting gangs from 1997 to 1998 was 2 percent for large cities, nearly 5 percent for small cities, nearly 12 percent for suburban counties, and more than 9 percent for rural counties.

Number of youth gangs and gang members

Prior to the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey, the highest estimates of gang activity ranged from 8,600 to 9,000 gangs and 375,000 to 400,000 gang members (Curry, Ball, and Decker, 1996a, b, c; Klein, 1995). As noted earlier,

From 1996 to 1998, the estimated number of youth gangs in the United States decreased by nearly 7 percent and the number of gang members decreased by nearly 8 percent.

Table 8: Reported and Estimated Number of Jurisdictions With Active Youth Gangs, by Area Type, 1996, 1997, and 1998

	1996		1997		1998	
Area Type	**Reported**	**Estimated**	**Reported**	**Estimated**	**Reported**	**Estimated**
Large city	785	899	786	870	736	852
Small city	113	2,948	125	2,913	117	2,778
Suburban county	329	379	337	371	261	328
Rural county	158	598	164	558	139	505
Total	1,385	4,824	1,412	4,712	1,253	4,463

Note: Response rates varied for each survey year; therefore, the reported number of jurisdictions with active youth gangs in one year versus the estimated number does not increase/decrease proportionally compared with the other years' surveys.

however, most surveys prior to 1995 were limited in size and scope. The 1995 National Youth Gang Survey indicated that approximately 23,000 gangs and 665,000 gang members were active in the United States in 1995. The 1996, 1997, and 1998 National Youth Gang Surveys, which used a statistically representative sample, produced estimates of 31,000 gangs and 846,000 gang members for 1996, 30,500 gangs and 816,000 gang members for 1997, and 28,700 gangs and 780,200 gang members for 1998 (table 9).

Table 9: Estimated Number of Youth Gangs and Gang Members, by Area Type, 1996, 1997, and 1998

	Gangs				Gang Members			
Area Type	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**Percent Change 1996–1998**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**Percent Change 1996–1998**
Large city	12,841	12,831	12,538	–2%	513,243	483,829	482,380	–6%
Small city	8,053	9,704	8,413	4	92,448	97,701	94,875	3
Suburban county	7,956	6,110	6,040	–24	222,267	208,785	176,610	–21
Rural county	1,968	1,888	1,716	–13	18,470	25,581	26,368	43
Total	30,818	30,533	28,707	–7	846,428	815,896	780,233	–8

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gangs and gang members reported in each jurisdiction.

Table 9 shows that from 1996 to 1998, the estimated number of youth gangs in the United States decreased by nearly 7 percent and the number of gang members decreased by nearly 8 percent. The largest drop in the number of gangs occurred in suburban counties (–24 percent), followed by rural counties (–13 percent). The largest drop in the number of gang members occurred in suburban counties (–21 percent), followed by large cities (–6 percent). Counter to the nationwide trend, the number of gang members increased 43 percent in rural counties and 3 percent in small cities.

In small cities, the number of youth gangs and gang members increased from 1996 to 1997 and decreased from 1997 to 1998. A mixed pattern was seen in rural counties, where the number of gangs decreased but the number of gang members increased in both 1997 and 1998. Table 10 shows the distribution of reported and estimated youth gangs and gang members in 1998, by area type. Comparing estimates for each area type with the national total estimate reveals that 44 percent of all gangs were in large cities, 29 percent in small cities, 21 percent in suburban counties, and 6 percent in rural counties. A similar comparison for gang members reveals a different pattern: nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of all gang members were in large cities, 12 percent in small cities, 23 percent in suburban counties, and 3 percent in rural counties. Whereas most gangs were in large cities, followed by small cities, most gang members were in large cities, followed by suburban counties. Small cities had a relatively larger percentage of gangs (29 percent of the total) than gang members (only 12 percent). Conversely, large cities had 62 percent of all gang members but only 44 percent of all gangs. Thus, compared with small cities, large cities had relatively fewer gangs but these gangs had more members.

Table 10: Reported and Estimated Number of Youth Gangs and Gang Members, by Area Type, 1998

	Reported		Estimated	
Area Type	**Gangs**	**Gang Members**	**Gangs**	**Gang Members**
Large city	11,196	440,298	12,538	482,380
Small city	354	3,994	8,413	94,875
Suburban county	4,152	116,533	6,040	176,610
Rural county	472	7,250	1,716	26,368
Total	16,174	568,075	28,707	780,233

Table 11 shows the average number of youth gangs and gang members per jurisdiction, by population size, in 1996, 1997, and 1998. This table illustrates the correlation between population size and both the number of gangs and the number of gang members: the larger the population size, the greater the average number of gangs and gang members per jurisdiction, for all 3 years. This table also shows that most of the nationwide decrease in the number of gangs and gang members per jurisdiction from 1996 to 1998 was accounted for by the steep drop in jurisdictions with populations between 100,000 and 249,999. Jurisdictions with populations of 250,000 or more had a sharp drop in the average number of gang members, but not in the average number of gangs, during this period. Jurisdictions with populations of less than 100,000 had no noticeable change in the average number of gangs or gang members per jurisdiction from 1996 to 1998.

The larger the population size, the greater the average number of gangs and gang members per jurisdiction.

Table 11: Average Number of Youth Gangs and Gang Members per Jurisdiction, by Population Size, 1996, 1997, and 1998

	1996		1997		1998	
Population Size	**Gangs**	**Gang Members**	**Gangs**	**Gang Members**	**Gangs**	**Gang Members**
250,000 or more	80 (*n*=90)*	5,894 (*n*=68)	83 (*n*=88)	5,120 (*n*=77)	83 (*n*=78)	4,465 (*n*=73)
100,000–249,999	32 (*n*=167)	1,016 (*n*=141)	22 (*n*=179)	764 (*n*=159)	21 (*n*=154)	712 (*n*=148)
50,000–99,999	10 (*n*=304)	352 (*n*=221)	9 (*n*=333)	289 (*n*=286)	10 (*n*=273)	307 (*n*=235)
25,000–49,999	6 (*n*=414)	134 (*n*=302)	6 (*n*=406)	128 (*n*=332)	7 (*n*=377)	151 (*n*=320)
10,000–24,999	4 (*n*=143)	84 (*n*=91)	5 (*n*=144)	85 (*n*=99)	5 (*n*=177)	88 (*n*=131)
Less than 10,000	3 (*n*=132)	37 (*n*=85)	4 (*n*=149)	55 (*n*=113)	3 (*n*=124)	41 (*n*=109)
Overall average	15 (*n*=1,250)	741 (*n*=908)	14 (*n*=1,299)	615 (*n*=1,066)	14 (*n*=1,183)	559 (*n*=1,016)

Note: The overall average takes into account all jurisdictions, regardless of population size. The particular averages take into account the population size of the jurisdiction and the number of jurisdictions for a particular population size. The overall average is not an average of particular averages.
n=number of observations.

Perception of the youth gang problem

In the 1998 survey, respondents were asked to compare their youth gang problem in 1998 with that in 1997 and to make a general assessment as to whether it was "staying about the same," "getting better," or "getting worse." Most respondents said the problem was staying about the same (42 percent), 28 percent said it was getting worse, and 30 percent said it was getting better. Compared with 1997 survey respondents, who were asked to make comparisons with 1996, more 1998 respondents perceived that their gang problem was getting better. In 1997, 45 percent said the problem was staying about the same, 35 percent said it was getting worse, and 20 percent said it was getting better. Nevertheless, more than two-thirds of respondents in 1998 said their gang problem was either staying about the same or getting worse.

Gang member demographics

Respondents were asked about the demographic characteristics (age, gender, and race/ethnicity) of gang members in the 1996 and 1998 National Youth Gang Surveys. Thus, the 1998 survey results can be compared with the 1996 results.

Age

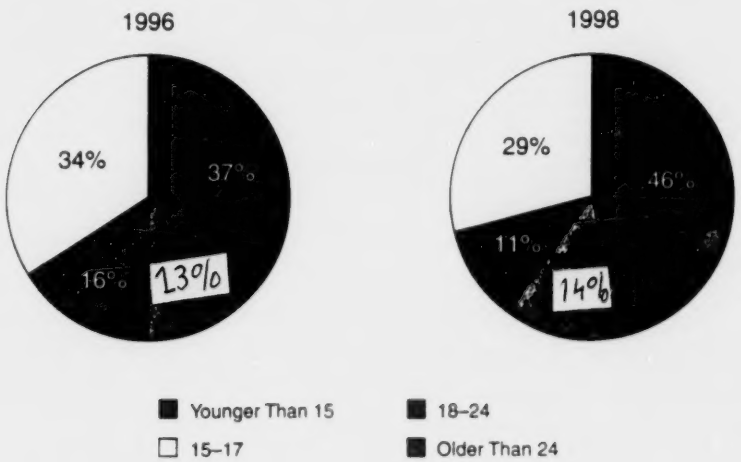
As noted earlier, youth gang member age categories were defined as younger than 15, 15–17, 18–24, and older than 24. Tables 12 and 13 and figures 4 and 5 show data for these four categories. For purposes of analysis, the categories are sometimes combined to compare juvenile members (age 17 or younger) and adult members (age 18 or older).

In 1996, youth gang members were evenly split between juveniles and adults (see figure 4). In 1998, survey respondents reported that about 60 percent of gang members were adults and 40 percent were juveniles. This represents a

significant shift in the age of gang members. During the 2-year period, the percentage of adult gang members increased from 50 to 60 percent. Almost all of this increase was accounted for by growth in the 18–24 age group, which increased by 9 percent. The age group older than 24 grew only 1 percent, and the age groups 15–17 and younger than 15 each decreased 5 percent. Thus, aging of youth gangs between 1996 and 1998 can be attributed mainly to fewer youth 17 and younger joining gangs, some older adolescents staying in gangs longer (thus moving into the 18 or older categories), and some youth age 18 or older staying in gangs longer.[4] This aging of youth gang members is a development that bears watching closely in future National Youth Gang Surveys.

The aging of youth gang members is a development that bears watching closely in future National Youth Gang Surveys.

Figure 4: Age of Youth Gang Members, 1996 and 1998

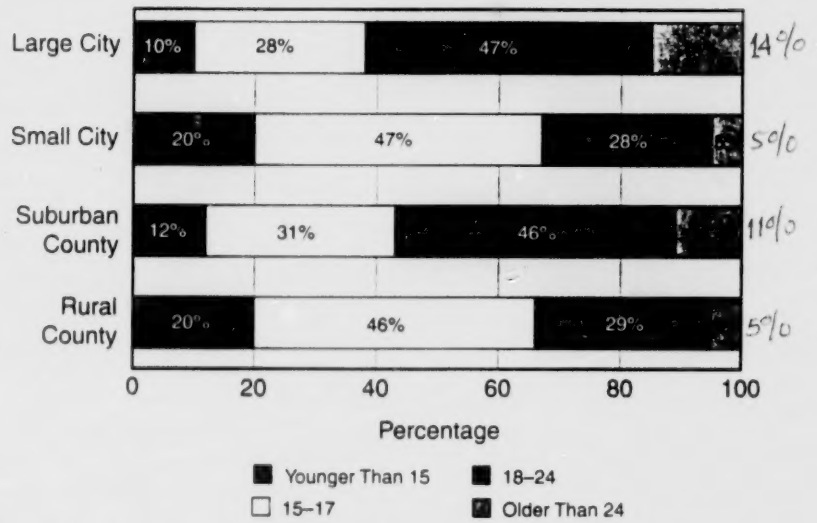


Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction.

Figure 5 illustrates the age ranges of youth gang members, by area type, in 1998. The figure clearly shows that adult gang members were far more prevalent in large cities and suburban counties than in small cities and rural counties. Large city and suburban county respondents reported higher proportions of adult gang members and lower proportions of juveniles, whereas small cities and rural counties reported the opposite pattern. In large cities, 61 percent of all gang members were age 18 or older. In contrast, gang members age 17 or younger were more prevalent in small cities (67 percent) and rural counties (66 percent).

Adults represented a majority of all gang members in the large cities of all regions and in suburban counties in the Midwest and West.

Figure 5: Age of Youth Gang Members, by Area Type, 1998



Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction.

Table 12 compares the age ranges of youth gang members, by area type, in 1996 and 1998 and shows the percent change over the 2-year period. This change was most pronounced in large cities, where the proportion of adult gang members increased from 51 percent in 1996 to 61 percent in 1998. All of that increase was for the 18–24 age group; the older-than-24 age group had no change. During the same period, the proportion of juveniles decreased in all area types except suburban counties; the largest decrease was in large cities (5 percent for the younger-than-15 age group and 6 percent for the 15–17 age group). The younger-than-15 age group also decreased 6 percent in rural counties. In small cities, the 15–17 age group decreased, while the younger-than-15 age group had no change. All decreases for suburban and rural areas were for the younger-than-15 age group; the 15–17 age group actually increased.

Table 13 shows the age ranges of youth gang members, by region within each area type, in 1998. The South stands out as the region in which juvenile gang members were most prevalent. In the South, juveniles were reported to be a majority or near majority of gang members in small cities (76 percent), rural counties (66 percent), and suburban counties (50 percent); large cities, where juveniles represented 48 percent of all gang members, were the only exception to this pattern. Adults represented a majority of all gang members in the large cities of all regions and in suburban counties in the Midwest (61 percent) and West (61 percent). Adults were predominant in large cities in the West (67 percent).

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Table 12: Age of Youth Gang Members, by Area Type, 1996 and 1998

Age	1996	1998	Percent Change
Large city			
Younger than 15	15%	10%	–5%
15–17	34	28	–6
18–24	37	47	+10
Older than 24	14	14	No change
Total	100	99	
Small city			
Younger than 15	20	20	No change
15–17	49	47	–2
18–24	25	28	+3
Older than 24	5	5	No change
Total	99	100	
Suburban county			
Younger than 15	15	12	–3
15–17	27	31	+4
18–24	44	46	+2
Older than 24	14	11	–3
Total	100	100	
Rural county			
Younger than 15	26	20	–6
15–17	45	46	+1
18–24	27	29	+2
Older than 24	3	5	+2
Total	101	100	

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction. The percentages within each area type may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

All research concludes that males dominate youth gang membership, but estimates of the proportions of female representation vary widely.

Gender

All research concludes that males dominate youth gang membership, but estimates of the proportions of female representation vary widely. Some researchers contend that law enforcement agencies tend to minimize female gang membership. Curry (1998) suggests that law enforcement may be less likely to identify females as gang members than males because of females' lower levels of criminality. Respondents in 1998 reported that 92 percent of gang members in their jurisdictions were male (see table 14). This is a small increase from the 90 percent reported by 1996 survey respondents.

Female gang members were least prevalent in large cities (7 percent) and most prevalent in small cities (12 percent) and rural counties (11 percent). As shown in table 15, female gang members were more prevalent in the Northeast (13 percent) than in other regions. Their representation was lowest in the Midwest (5 percent), far lower than in the Northeast.

Survey responses indicated that less than 2 percent of all gangs in the United States in 1998 were female dominated.

Table 13: Age of Youth Gang Members, by Area Type and Region, 1998

Area Type and Region	Younger Than 15	15–17	18–24	Older Than 24	Total	n*
Large city						
Midwest	12%	31%	42%	17%	102	162
Northeast	13	29	40	18	100	80
South	17	31	43	9	100	169
West	7	26	52	15	100	195
Overall	10	28	47	15	100	606
Small city						
Midwest	15	48	30	5	98	33
Northeast	14	46	38	2	100	14
South	31	45	23	2	101	23
West	20	48	26	6	100	20
Overall	20	47	28	5	100	90
Suburban county						
Midwest	9	31	48	13	101	49
Northeast	10	59	28	3	100	7
South	10	40	37	11	98	100
West	14	26	50	11	101	35
Overall	12	31	46	11	100	191
Rural county						
Midwest	23	46	26	5	100	33
Northeast	5	90	5	0	100	1†
South	20	46	30	5	101	47
West	21	46	27	6	100	22
Overall	20	46	29	5	100	103
All area types						
Midwest	15	39	37	10	101	277
Northeast	11	56	28	6	101	102
South	20	41	33	7	100	339
West	16	37	39	10	102	272
Overall	11	29	46	14	100	990

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction. The percentages within each category may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

*n=number of observations.

†Only one jurisdiction met the criteria of rural county and Northeast.

Female-dominated gangs. In 1998, survey respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of youth gangs in their jurisdictions that were made up entirely or mostly (more than 50 percent) of females. Survey responses indicated that less than 2 percent (1.76 percent) of all gangs in the United States in 1998 were female dominated. Table 16 shows that 833 jurisdictions (83 percent) reported no such gangs. Of the 171 jurisdictions reporting female-dominated gangs, 143 reported that these gangs represented only 14 percent or less of total gangs in their jurisdictions.

Table 14: Gender of Youth Gang Members, by Area Type, 1998

Area Type	Male	Female	*n**
Large city	93%	7%	604
Small city	88	12	88
Suburban county	90	10	196
Rural county	89	11	102
Overall	92	8	990

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction.
**n*=number of observations.

Table 15: Gender of Youth Gang Members, by Region, 1998

Region	Male	Female	*n**
Midwest	95%	5%	272
Northeast	87	13	105
South	91	9	344
West	92	8	269
Overall	92	8	990

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction.
**n*=number of observations.

Table 16: Female-Dominated Youth Gangs as Percentage of Total Gangs, 1998

Percentage Reported	Number of Jurisdictions
100%	1
50–99	4
25–49	10
20–24	7
15–19	6
10–14	28
5–9	32
1–4	83
None	833
Total	1,004

Table 17 shows that the percentage of female-dominated youth gangs was highest in the Northeast; however, the South reported the largest number of female-dominated gangs (123).

As shown in table 18, female-dominated gangs were most prevalent in the largest jurisdictions. The smallest percentages were in the least populated areas (populations of 10,000 or less).

The percentage of female-dominated youth gangs was highest in the Northeast; however, the South reported the largest number of female-dominated gangs .

The 1998 National Youth Gang Survey revealed that Hispanics were the predominant racial/ethnic group among all gang members nationwide.

Table 17: Female-Dominated Youth Gangs, by Region, 1998

Region	Total Gangs	Female-Dominated Gangs		
		Number	Percent	n*
Midwest	2,285	33	1%	287
Northeast	683	26	4	102
South	4,615	123	3	340
West	6,331	65	1	275
Overall	13,914	247	2	1,004

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gangs reported in each jurisdiction.
n=number of observations.

Table 18: Female-Dominated Youth Gangs, by Population Size, 1998

Population Size	Total Gangs	Female-Dominated Gangs		
		Number	Percent	n*
250,000 or more	5,283	120	2%	70
100,000– 249,999	3,123	46	2	134
50,000–99,999	2, 234	29	1	230
25,000–49,999	2,203	34	2	321
10,000–24,999	751	13	2	145
Less than 10,000	320	3	1	104
Overall	13,914	245	2	1,004

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gangs reported in each jurisdiction.
n=number of observations.

Race/Ethnicity

The 1998 National Youth Gang Survey revealed that Hispanics were the predominant racial/ethnic group among all gang members nationwide. As shown in table 19, Hispanics accounted for 46 percent of all gang members, followed by African Americans (34 percent), Caucasians (12 percent), Asians (6 percent), and other races (2 percent).

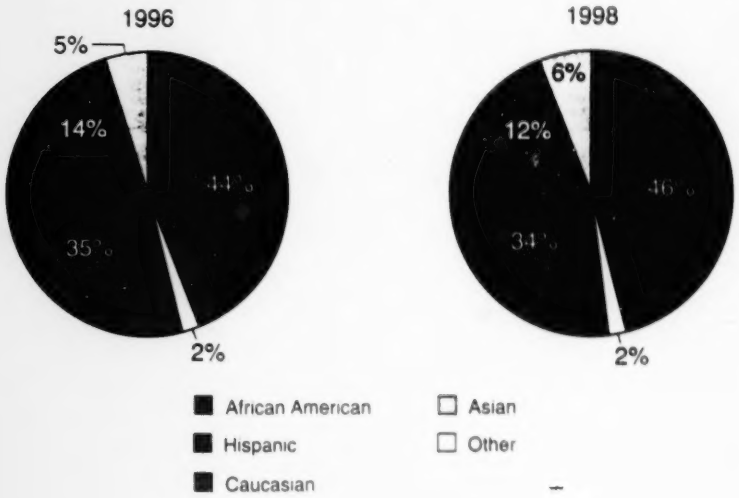
Table 19: Race/Ethnicity of Youth Gang Members, 1998

Race/Ethnicity	Gang Members	
	Number	Percent
African American	184,467	34%
Hispanic	255,254	46
Caucasian	64,828	12
Asian	34,296	6
Other	9,672	2
Total	548,517	100

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction. Number of observations=1,005.

Figure 6 compares race/ethnicity of youth gang members in 1996 and 1998. There was a slight increase in the proportion of Hispanic and Asian gang members and a slight decrease in the proportion of Caucasian and African American members over the 2-year period.

Figure 6: Race/Ethnicity of Youth Gang Members, 1996 and 1998



Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction.

As shown in table 20, Hispanic was the predominant racial/ethnic group among youth gang members in large cities (47 percent of all gang members), suburban counties (47 percent), and small cities (46 percent), and African American was the predominant racial/ethnic group in rural counties (36 percent). Although Caucasians did not represent the largest proportion of gang members in any of the area types, they were rather prevalent in small cities and rural counties, where they represented 30 percent and 27 percent of all gang members, respectively.

Table 20: Race/Ethnicity of Youth Gang Members, by Area Type, 1998

Area Type	African American	Hispanic	Caucasian	Asian	Other	Total	*n**
Large city	35%	47%	11%	6%	2%	101%	615
Small city	20	46	30	3	1	100	90
Suburban county	28	47	15	8	3	101	198
Rural county	36	32	27	2	4	101	102
Overall	34	46	12	6	2	100	1,005

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction. The percentages within each area type may not total 100 percent because of rounding.
*n=number of observations.

Although Caucasians did not represent the largest proportion of gang members in any of the area types, they were rather prevalent in small cities and rural counties.

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African American youth gang members were predominant in the Midwest and Northeast, and Hispanic gang members were predominant in the South and West.

Table 21 shows that African American youth gang members were predominant in the Midwest and Northeast, and Hispanic gang members were predominant in the South and West. African Americans were a majority (57 percent) of the gang members in the Midwest, and Hispanics were a majority (60 percent) in the West. African American gang members were also very prevalent in the Northeast (41 percent), and Hispanic gang members were very prevalent in the South (42 percent). The prevalence of white gang members was similar across three of the regions: the Midwest (14 percent), the Northeast (15 percent), and the South (19 percent). Asian gang members were reported primarily in the Northeast and West (9 percent and 8 percent, respectively).

Table 21: Race/Ethnicity of Youth Gang Members, by Region, 1998

Region	African American	Hispanic	Caucasian	Asian	Other	Total	*n**
Midwest	57%	25%	14%	3%	1%	100%	279
Northeast	41	33	15	9	3	101	104
South	33	42	19	5	1	100	347
West	22	60	7	8	3	100	275
Overall	34	46	12	6	2	100	1,005

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction. The percentages within each region may not total 100 percent because of rounding.
**n*=number of observations.

Table 22 shows the race/ethnicity of youth gang members in 1998, by area type and region. In large cities in the Midwest, African American gang members were most prevalent (57 percent). African American gang members also were most prevalent in large cities in the Northeast (40 percent). Hispanic gang members were most prevalent in large cities in the South (43 percent), and they represented a majority of gang members in large cities in the West (60 percent). A similar pattern is seen in suburban counties, where African American gang members were most prevalent in the Midwest and Northeast, and Hispanic gang members were most prevalent in the West and South.

In small cities, Hispanic gang members were far more prevalent than other racial/ethnic groups in the West (76 percent), African American gang members were almost a majority in the South (48 percent), and Caucasian gang members were almost a majority in the Midwest (49 percent) and Northeast (47 percent). A similar pattern is seen in rural counties, where Hispanic gang members were far more prevalent than other racial/ethnic groups in the West (69 percent), and African American gang members were almost a majority in the South (48 percent). In rural counties, however, Caucasian gang members were in the majority in the Midwest (55 percent).

Multiethnic/multiracial youth gangs. The 1998 survey asked respondents to estimate the percentage of youth gangs in their jurisdictions with a significant

Table 22: Race/Ethnicity of Youth Gang Members, by Area Type and Region, 1998

Area Type and Region	African American	Hispanic	Caucasian	Asian	Other	Total	n*
Large city							
Midwest	57%	27%	12%	3%	1%	100%	164
Northeast	40	34	14	12	1	101	81
South	36	43	16	4	1	100	173
West	22	60	7	8	2	99	197
Small city							
Midwest	18	29	49	1	2	99	33
Northeast	39	10	47	4	0	100	14
South	48	13	27	11	1	100	23
West	5	76	16	2	2	101	20
Suburban county							
Midwest	63	11	22	4	1	101	50
Northeast	46	31	16	0	7	100	8
South	21	43	28	8	1	101	104
West	22	59	7	9	4	101	36
Rural county							
Midwest	18	14	55	1	12	100	32
Northeast	0	20	80	0	0	100	1†
South	48	25	25	2	0	100	47
West	5	69	14	0	12	100	22
Overall	34	46	12	6	2	100	1,005

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gang members reported in each jurisdiction. The percentages within each category may not total 100 percent because of rounding.
n=number of observations.
†Only one jurisdiction met the criteria of rural county and Northeast.

The largest proportion of mixed gangs was in small cities, and the smallest proportion was in large cities.

mixture of two or more racial/ethnic groups. Survey responses indicated that 36 percent of all gangs in the United States in 1998 were "mixed."

Table 23 shows the proportion of mixed gangs in large cities, small cities, suburban counties, and rural counties. The largest proportion of mixed gangs was in small cities (54 percent), and the smallest proportion was in large cities (32 percent).

As shown in table 24, the proportion of mixed gangs was larger in the Midwest than in any other region, regardless of area type: small cities (66 percent), suburban counties (62 percent), rural counties (50 percent), and large cities (40 percent). The proportion of mixed gangs in large cities was also 40 percent in the South.

Table 23: Multiethnic/Multiracial Youth Gangs, by Area Type, 1998

Area Type	Total Gangs	Mixed Gangs		
		Number	Percent	*n**
Large city	9,982	3,204	32%	630
Small city	316	171	54	93
Suburban county	3,858	1,733	45	207
Rural county	420	178	42	113

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gangs reported in each jurisdiction.
**n*=number of observations.

Table 24: Multiethnic/Multiracial Youth Gangs, by Area Type and Region, 1998

Area Type and Region	Total Gangs	Mixed Gangs		
		Number	Percent	*n**
Large city	9,982	3,204	32%	630
Midwest	1,915	767	40	172
Northeast	566	145	26	79
South	2,918	1,161	40	181
West	4,583	1,131	25	198
Small city	316	171	54	93
Midwest	125	83	66	37
Northeast	27	13	49	10
South	54	18	33	24
West	110	57	52	22
Suburban county	3,858	1,733	45	207
Midwest	671	416	62	51
Northeast	70	39	55	7
South	1,569	749	48	108
West	1,548	529	34	41
Rural county	420	178	42	113
Midwest	93	47	50	36
Northeast	1	1	100	1†
South	240	89	37	54
West	86	41	48	22
All area types				
Midwest	2,804	1,313	47	296
Northeast	664	198	30	97
South	4,781	2,017	42	367
West	6,327	1,758	28	283

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gangs reported in each jurisdiction.
**n*=number of observations.
†Insufficient cases.

Youth gangs and crime

Respondents to the 1998 survey were asked about gang crime definitions, homicides, gang member involvement in criminal activity, use of firearms in assault crimes, and drug gangs. Respondents to the 1996 and 1997 surveys were also asked about homicides, involvement in criminal activity, and drug gangs, and respondents to the 1997 survey were also asked about definitions. Thus, the 1998 survey results can be compared with previous survey results.

Gang crime definitions

To clarify the definitional issues surrounding youth gang crime, respondents were asked to indicate which of the following gang crime definitions their agencies used most frequently: member-based—a crime in which a gang member or members are either the perpetrators or the victims, regardless of the motive; motive-based—a crime committed by a gang member or members in which the underlying reason is to further the interests and activities of the gang; or some other definition as specified. As shown in table 25, a majority (58 percent) of respondents said they used the member-based definition, nearly 32 percent used the motive-based definition, and almost 11 percent said they used some other definition.

Respondents were asked to indicate which of the following gang crime definitions their agencies used most frequently: member-based, motive-based, or some other definition.

Table 25: Youth Gang Crime Definitions Used by Jurisdictions, 1998

	Jurisdictions	
Type of Definition	**Number**	**Percent**
Member-based	712	58%
Motive-based	389	32
Other	130	11
Total	1,231	101

Note: The percentages for types of definitions do not total 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 26 shows that a majority of jurisdictions in all area types used a member-based definition. A motive-based definition was more common in small cities (37 percent) and rural counties (36 percent) than in large cities (30 percent) and suburban counties (30 percent). Suburban counties and large cities were more likely than other area types to use other definitions (12 percent and 11 percent, respectively).

Table 26: Youth Gang Crime Definitions Used by Jurisdictions, by Area Type, 1998

Type of	Large City		Small City		Suburban County		Rural County	
Definition	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Member-based	424	59%	62	53%	147	58%	79	57%
Motive-based	219	30	43	37	77	30	50	36
Other	79	11	11	9	31	12	9	7
Total	722	100	116	99	255	100	138	100

Note: Number and percent refer to reporting jurisdictions. The percentages within each area type may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 27: Youth Gang Crime Definitions Used by Jurisdictions, by Region, 1998

Type of Definition	Midwest		Northeast		South		West	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Member-based	225	61%	65	51%	240	58%	182	57%
Motive-based	109	30	42	33	135	33	103	32
Other	34	9	21	16	38	9	37	11
Total	368	100	128	100	413	100	322	100

Note: Number and percent refer to reporting jurisdictions.

The use of member-based or motive-based definitions varied by region (see table 27). Law enforcement agencies in the Midwest were most likely to use a member-based definition. Agencies in the Northeast were least likely to use a member-based definition (51 percent) and most likely to use some other definition (16 percent).

Homicides

In this Summary, NYGC reports neither the total number of gang homicides nor a national estimate of gang homicides for 1998. There are many sources of error in gang homicide data. First, compiling national gang homicide data through surveys of law enforcement agencies involves asking agencies to provide NYGC with a service they may not routinely provide for local assessment and policymaking. These agencies compile crime data for investigative purposes, not for the purpose of preparing survey responses. Second, whether law enforcement agencies count only gang-motivated homicides (which grow out of a gang function) or gang-related homicides (in which a gang member need only be involved in some capacity) can make a big difference in the resulting homicide count. Third, gang definitions vary significantly among law enforcement agencies and State statutes. Fourth, law enforcement officials' view of gang crime as a public safety concern can affect homicide reporting. A major reason for underreporting of gang homicide data is that many jurisdictions are unable or choose not to identify the offense as "gang-related." For a variety of reasons, officials in some localities deny the existence of gang problems altogether; in others, public policy does not regard gang problems as a major concern. Finally, an analysis of the 1996–98 National Youth Gang Survey data revealed that a few large cities tend to report erratic numbers of gang homicides (Curry, Howell, and Maxson, forthcoming).

Taking these issues into account, Curry and colleagues analyzed gang homicides reported in the National Youth Gang Survey during 1996–98. The analysis, which was conducted for NYGC, will be published shortly as an OJJDP Fact Sheet (forthcoming). Part of the analysis is summarized here. Curry and colleagues included in their analysis cities with populations of 25,000 or more that reported gang problems and gang homicides over the 3-year period from 1996 to 1998. Remarkably, 99.1 percent of the cities with populations of 25,000

or more responded to one or more of the three surveys, and nearly three-fourths responded to all three surveys. (Large cities that reported erratic numbers of gang homicides were excluded from the analysis.)

The analysis found that more than one-half (55 percent) of the cities that experienced gang problems in at least 1 year during 1996–98 did not report any gang homicides (see table 28), but almost all (93 percent) of these were cities with populations less than 200,000. Of the cities that experienced gang problems in the 3-year period, nearly one-half (45 percent) reported a gang homicide in at least 1 year.

The overwhelming majority of the cities with populations of 25,000 or more that reported gang homicides in the 1996–98 period (88 percent) reported a maximum of 1–10 homicides in any given year of the 3-year period (table 28). Ten percent (45 cities) reported a maximum of 11–50 homicides, and 2 percent (8 cities) reported a maximum of more than 50 homicides.

Among the 237 cities that reported a gang problem and provided a homicide statistic in all 3 years, 49 percent reported a decrease in gang homicides over the 3-year period, 15 percent stayed the same, and 36 percent reported an increase. In a comparison, Curry, Howell, and Maxson (forthcoming) found that among 408 cities that reported gang homicides (in several surveys) during both the early and middle 1990's, a decrease was observed in 32 percent of the cities and an increase was observed in 29 percent. The remainder (39 percent) stayed the same at both points in time. Thus, the gang homicide picture appears to have been more dynamic in the latter part of the decade than in the early to middle 1990's.

The gang homicide picture appears to have been more dynamic in the latter part of the decade than in the early to middle 1990's.

Table 28: Jurisdictions by Population Size Reporting Homicides in 1996, 1997, and/or 1998 Surveys

Maximum Homicides	Population Size								Total Number
	200,000 or More		100,000–199,999		50,000–99,999		25,000–49,999		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
None reported	5	7%	24	21%	163	54%	340	71%	532
1–10	30	43	78	68	135	45	140	29	383
11–50	30	43	10	9	3	1	2	0	45
51–100	3	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	6
More than 100	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	70	100	114	100	302	100	482	100	968

Gang member involvement in criminal activity

Since the first reports of youth gang activities were made, gangs typically have been associated with criminal acts (Sante, 1991). In 1998, survey respondents were asked to indicate the proportion of youth gang members who were involved in the following offenses in their jurisdiction: aggravated assault, robbery, burglary/breaking and entering, motor vehicle theft, larceny/theft, and

In 1998, a larger proportion of gang members were involved in drug sales than in any other criminal activity measured in the survey.

drug sales. These crimes were selected because they are serious and/or violent crimes commonly associated with gang activity.

Readers are advised that this question was asked differently in the 1998 survey than in the 1996 and 1997 surveys. The 1998 question asked what proportion of gang members were involved in various crimes, producing a measure of the prevalence of gang member involvement in criminal activity. In the two prior surveys, respondents were asked to what degree gang members were involved in various crimes. Responses to that question provided a measure of the incidence of gang member criminal activity.

In 1998, a larger proportion of gang members were involved in drug sales than in any other criminal activity measured in the survey (see table 29). Slightly more than one-fourth (27 percent) of the respondents estimated that most/all of their gang members were involved in drug sales; the next highest level of involvement was in larceny/theft (17 percent), followed by burglary/breaking and entering (13 percent), aggravated assault (12 percent), motor vehicle theft (11 percent), and robbery (3 percent).

Although a 1997–98 comparison is not possible because the form of the question changed in 1998, it can be seen that the prevalence pattern reported in 1998 differs in several important respects from the incidence pattern reported in 1997. In 1997, survey respondents estimated that the incidence rate was highest for drug sales (29 percent), followed by larceny/theft (28 percent), aggravated assault (28 percent), motor vehicle theft (27 percent), burglary/breaking and entering (26 percent), and robbery (13 percent).

Comparison between the two surveys suggests that the 1998 prevalence and 1997 incidence rates are comparable for drug sales but that the 1997 incidence rates appear to be much higher than the 1998 prevalence rates for other offenses. The 1997 incidence rates are about twice the prevalence rates for all other offenses except robbery. In the case of robbery, the 1997 incidence rate is four times higher than the 1998 prevalence rate. This comparison suggests that a very small proportion of gang members are involved in robbery but that those who are involved are very actively involved.

Table 29 shows that prevalence of youth gang member involvement in crime varied by area type in 1998. When "most/all" and "some" responses are combined, this table indicates that gang member involvement in aggravated assault and robbery was highest in large cities. In the past, youth gang crime has been associated almost exclusively with large cities. However, in 1998, survey respondents in suburban counties reported the highest levels of gang involvement in motor vehicle theft, larceny/theft, and drug sales and also reported relatively high levels of gang member involvement in aggravated assault and robbery. Large cities and suburban counties reported far more gang member involvement in violent crimes than did small cities and rural counties.

Clearly, serious youth gang crimes are no longer concentrated only in the Nation's large cities. Surprisingly, the highest proportion of gang members involved in burglary/breaking and entering was reported in rural counties, followed closely by suburban counties, then large cities. Gang members in small cities and rural counties also were reported to be extensively involved in drug

sales and property crimes. Very small proportions of gang members were reported to be involved in robbery and aggravated assault in small cities and rural counties. More than 8 in 10 respondents in small cities and rural counties estimated that "few" or "none" of their gang members were involved in robbery. Low levels of involvement in small cities and rural counties were also reported for aggravated assault (6 in 10 respondents) and motor vehicle theft (7 in 10).

Table 29: Jurisdictions Reporting Youth Gang Member Involvement in Criminal Activity, by Area Type, 1998

Type of Offense/ Proportion of Gang Members Involved	All Area Types		Large City		Small City		Suburban County		Rural County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Aggravated assault										
Most/all	147	12%	100	14%	6	5%	29	12%	12	9%
Some	515	43	334	47	33	28	109	44	39	29
Few	473	40	252	36	63	54	93	38	65	48
None	69	6	20	3	14	12	16	7	19	14
Robbery										
Most/all	39	3	22	3	3	3	10	4	4	3
Some	362	30	252	36	13	11	80	33	17	13
Few	580	49	349	50	52	45	117	48	62	46
None	215	18	77	11	48	41	39	16	51	38
Burglary/breaking and entering										
Most/all	157	13	79	11	12	10	38	15	28	21
Some	539	45	314	45	43	37	120	49	62	46
Few	426	36	266	38	52	45	75	31	33	25
None	69	6	37	5	8	7	13	5	11	8
Motor vehicle theft										
Most/all	136	11	95	14	6	5	27	11	8	6
Some	491	41	308	44	29	25	117	48	37	27
Few	442	37	250	36	52	45	75	31	65	48
None	126	11	47	7	28	24	26	11	25	19
Larceny/theft										
Most/all	209	17	124	18	15	13	45	18	25	19
Some	591	49	358	51	53	46	130	53	50	37
Few	347	29	198	28	41	35	59	24	49	37
None	51	4	22	3	7	6	12	5	10	8
Drug sales										
Most/all	329	27	196	28	23	20	75	30	35	26
Some	540	45	311	44	52	44	114	46	63	46
Few	299	25	179	26	39	33	52	21	29	21
None	34	3	15	2	3	3	7	3	9	7

Note: The percentages within each offense category may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

Significant regional differences were reported with respect to the prevalence of gang member involvement in various serious and violent crimes.

Table 29 shows a fairly high level of gang member involvement in serious and violent crimes in rural counties compared with small cities. Again, when "most/all" and "some" responses are combined, a larger proportion of gang members in rural counties than small cities were reported to be involved in every offense except larceny/theft.

Table 30 shows the estimated proportion of youth gang members involved in crime in 1998, by region. Comparing the percentages in each region with the national average reveals some important regional differences. When "most/all" and "some" responses are combined, gang members in the Midwest were involved at a level above the national average in only one offense: drug sales. Somewhat lower levels of involvement in the Midwest than elsewhere were reported for aggravated assault and motor vehicle theft.

Gang members in the Northeast had much higher than average involvement in robbery and somewhat higher than average involvement in aggravated assault and drug sales. Their involvement was much lower than the national average for motor vehicle theft (lowest level of all regions) and larceny/theft.

Gang members in the South had much higher than average involvement in burglary/breaking and entering (highest level of all regions). Involvement in this region equaled or exceeded the national averages for all other offenses.

The West shows a different pattern. There, gang member involvement in burglary/breaking and entering and larceny/theft was similar to the national averages, but involvement was much higher in motor vehicle theft (highest level of all regions), somewhat higher in aggravated assault and robbery, and lower in drug sales (lowest level of all regions).

In sum, significant regional differences were reported with respect to the prevalence of gang member involvement in various serious and violent crimes. Northeastern gang members had higher than average involvement in robbery, aggravated assault, and drug sales. In the Midwest, gang member involvement was more than the national average in only one offense: drug sales. Gang members in the West were reported to have the highest level of involvement of all regions in motor vehicle theft and the lowest level of all regions in drug sales. Southern gang members were characterized by much higher than average involvement in burglary/breaking and entering (highest level of all regions) and high levels for all other offenses.

Use of firearms in assault crimes

Respondents were asked how often youth gang members used firearms in assault crimes. Nationwide, more than one-half (53 percent) of the respondents said gang members in their jurisdiction used firearms in assault crimes "often" or "sometimes." Nearly one-third (31 percent) said gang members used firearms "rarely," and only 16 percent said firearms were not used at all in conjunction with assaults.

Table 31 shows variations in youth gang firearm use in 1998, by area type. Firearms were used far more often in large cities and suburban counties than in

Table 30: Jurisdictions Reporting Youth Gang Member Involvement in Criminal Activity, by Region, 1998

Type of Offense/ Proportion of Gang Members Involved	All Regions		Midwest		Northeast		South		West	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Aggravated assault										
Most/all	147	12%	24	7%	20	16%	45	11%	58	18%
Some	515	43	146	41	54	43	177	44	138	44
Few	473	39	161	45	43	34	154	38	115	36
None	69	6	27	8	9	7	27	7	6	2
Robbery										
Most/all	39	3	7	2	5	4	16	4	11	4
Some	362	30	92	26	41	33	121	30	108	34
Few	580	49	169	48	60	48	194	48	157	50
None	215	18	86	24	20	16	71	18	38	12
Burglary/breaking and entering										
Most/all	157	13	34	10	9	7	77	19	37	12
Some	539	45	162	46	40	32	193	48	144	47
Few	426	36	145	41	66	53	105	26	110	36
None	69	6	15	4	9	7	29	7	16	5
Motor vehicle theft										
Most/all	136	11	24	7	11	9	52	13	49	16
Some	491	41	142	40	41	33	166	41	142	46
Few	442	37	150	43	57	46	131	32	104	33
None	126	11	37	11	16	13	56	14	17	5
Larceny/theft										
Most/all	209	17	57	16	19	15	88	22	45	15
Some	591	49	179	50	56	44	188	47	168	54
Few	347	29	110	31	45	35	101	25	91	29
None	51	4	10	3	7	6	27	7	7	2
Drug sales										
Most/all	329	27	112	32	42	33	126	31	49	16
Some	540	45	153	43	55	43	174	43	158	51
Few	299	25	80	23	26	21	93	23	100	32
None	34	3	9	3	4	3	15	4	6	2

Note: The percentages within each offense category may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

small cities and rural counties. More than one-half (59 percent) of large-city respondents said that gang members used firearms in assault crimes often or sometimes, and 60 percent of suburban counties responded similarly. In contrast, only 27 percent of respondents in small cities and 34 percent in rural counties said that gang members used firearms in assault crimes often or sometimes.

As shown in table 32, there were regional differences in youth gang member use of firearms in assault crimes. The frequency of firearm use was much higher in the South and West than in the two other regions.

Combining firearm use data for area types and regions, table 33 shows that in large cities, gang member use of firearms in assault crimes was most prevalent in the South, followed closely by the West, with less frequent use reported in the Midwest and Northeast. About two-thirds of respondents in large cities in the South (67 percent) and West (63 percent) said gang members used firearms in assault crimes "often" or "sometimes," compared with about one-half (52 percent) in the Midwest and 46 percent in the Northeast. The number of respondents in rural counties, suburban counties, and small cities was too small to permit valid comparisons.

Table 31: Jurisdictions Reporting Firearm Use by Youth Gang Members in Assault Crimes, by Area Type, 1998

Frequency of Firearm Use	All Area Types		Large City		Small City		Suburban County		Rural County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Often	244	21%	174	25%	5	5%	52	23%	13	10%
Sometimes	373	32	233	34	25	22	84	37	31	24
Rarely	358	31	205	30	37	33	62	27	54	43
Not used	188	16	82	12	45	40	32	14	29	23
Total	1,163	100	694	101	112	100	230	101	127	100

Note: The percentages within each area type may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 32: Jurisdictions Reporting Firearm Use by Youth Gang Members in Assault Crimes, by Region, 1998

Frequency of Firearm Use	All Regions		Midwest		Northeast		South		West	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Often	244	21%	52	15%	23	19%	84	22%	85	27%
Sometimes	373	32	90	27	30	25	142	37	111	35
Rarely	358	31	132	39	32	27	109	28	85	27
Not used	188	16	66	19	34	29	54	14	34	11
Total	1,163	100	340	100	119	100	389	101	315	100

Note: The percentages within each region may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 33: Jurisdictions Reporting Firearm Use by Youth Gang Members in Assault Crimes, by Area Type and Region, 1998

Area Type/ Frequency of Firearm Use	All Regions		Midwest		Northeast		South		West	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Large city										
Often	174	25%	38	20%	19	20%	53	28%	64	29%
Sometimes	233	34	61	32	24	26	74	39	74	34
Rarely	205	30	68	35	28	30	50	26	59	27
Not used	82	12	25	13	22	24	14	7	21	10
Small city										
Often	5	5	*		*		3	11	2	9
Sometimes	25	22	5	11	3	19	9	33	8	35
Rarely	37	33	22	48	3	19	5	19	7	30
Not used	45	40	19	41	10	63	10	37	6	26
Suburban county										
Often	52	23	12	20	4	44	18	16	18	37
Sometimes	84	37	15	25	3	33	45	40	21	43
Rarely	62	27	23	38	1	11	29	26	9	18
Not used	32	14	10	17	1	11	20	18	1	2
Rural county										
Often	13	10	2	5	*		10	17	1	4
Sometimes	31	24	9	21	*		14	24	8	32
Rarely	54	43	19	45	*		25	42	10	40
Not used	29	23	12	29	1	100	10	17	6	24

Note: The percentages within each category may not total 100 percent because of rounding.
*No agencies reporting.

Drug gangs

In 1998, survey respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of youth gangs in their jurisdictions that were drug gangs (i.e., organized specifically for the purpose of trafficking in drugs). A total of 34 percent of all youth gangs nationwide were reported to be drug gangs. Nearly 100 jurisdictions (99) reported that all of their youth gangs were drug gangs. More than 300 jurisdictions (343) said that none of their youth gangs were drug gangs. Tables 34–36 show the estimated percentage of drug gangs by area type, population size, and region.

Surprisingly, drug gangs were most prevalent in rural counties, where 38 percent of all youth gangs were said to be drug gangs (see table 34). The next largest proportion of drug gangs was reported in large cities (35 percent), followed by suburban counties (31 percent). They were least prevalent in small cities (25 percent).

Table 35 shows that drug gangs were most common in areas with very small populations (less than 10,000), where 40 percent of all gangs were reported to be drug gangs. The proportion of drug gangs was 39 percent in jurisdictions

Surprisingly, drug gangs were least prevalent in the West, where gang drug trafficking has historically been viewed as very prevalent.

with populations between 10,000 and 49,999 and 35 percent in areas with populations of 250,000 or more. They were least prevalent in cities of 50,000–99,999 population (25 percent). Among cities and counties with populations of less than 25,000, drug gangs were slightly more prevalent in the least populated areas (less than 10,000 population) but were also very prevalent in areas with populations of 10,000 to 24,999.

Table 34: Youth Drug Gangs, by Area Type, 1998

		Drug Gangs		
Area Type	**Total Gangs**	**Number**	**Percent**	***n****
Large city	8,812	3,082	35%	575
Small city	302	76	25	88
Suburban county	3,772	1,173	31	188
Rural county	357	135	38	101
Overall	13,243	4,466	34	952

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gangs reported in each jurisdiction.
**n*=number of observations.

Table 35: Youth Drug Gangs, by Population Size, 1998

		Drug Gangs		
Population Size	**Total Gangs**	**Number**	**Percent**	***n****
250,000 or more	5,355	1,870	35%	66
100,000–249,999	3,025	965	32	132
50,000–99,999	1,986	500	25	219
25,000–49,999	1,900	745	39	297
10,000–24,999	684	269	39	139
Less than 10,000	293	118	40	99
Overall	13,243	4,467	34	952

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gangs reported in each jurisdiction.
**n*=number of observations.

As table 36 shows, the regional distribution of drug gangs also was uneven. Surprisingly, drug gangs were least prevalent in the West (only 18 percent), where gang drug trafficking has historically been viewed as very prevalent (see Klein, 1995, for a critique of this image of west coast gangs). Drug gangs were far more prevalent in the Northeast (60 percent), followed by the Midwest (46 percent).

Table 36: Youth Drug Gangs, by Region, 1998

Region	Total Gangs	Drug Gangs		n*
		Number	Percent	
Midwest	2,749	1,253	46%	283
Northeast	768	463	60	93
South	4,242	1,753	41	330
West	5,484	999	18	246
Overall	13,243	4,468	34	952

Note: Data are weighted to account for the number of gangs reported in each jurisdiction.
*n=number of observations.

Adults returning from prison: Effect on youth gangs

Survey respondents for 1998 were asked how much their jurisdiction's youth gang problem has been affected in the past few years by the return of gang-involved adults who have been in prison. Research suggests that involvement of ex-convicts in youth gangs increases the life of gangs and their level of violent crime, in part because of the ex-convicts' increased proclivity to violence following imprisonment and the visibility and history they contribute to youth gangs (Howell and Decker, 1999). As shown in table 37, the most common response to the question of how much the return of gang-involved adults from prison has affected the youth gang problem within a jurisdiction was "somewhat" (39 percent), followed closely by "very little" (38 percent). Only 10 percent said their gang problem was "very much" affected, and 13 percent said "not at all."

Table 37: Jurisdictions Reporting Effect of Gang-Involved Adults Returning From Prison on Youth Gangs, 1998

Effect	Jurisdictions Reporting	
	Number	Percent
Very much	112	10%
Somewhat	426	39
Very little	419	38
Not at all	143	13
Total	1,100	100

Table 38 shows that based on combined "very much" and "somewhat" responses, the return of gang-involved adults from prison has had the greatest effect on local gang problems in large cities (52 percent) and suburban counties (55 percent). The least effect was reported in small cities (30 percent) and rural counties (35 percent).

Survey respondents were asked how much their jurisdiction's youth gang problem has been affected by the return of gang-involved adults who have been in prison.

Table 38: Jurisdictions Reporting Effect of Gang-Involved Adults Returning From Prison on Youth Gangs, by Area Type, 1998

Effect	All Area Types		Large City		Small City		Suburban County		Rural County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Very much	112	10%	75	11%	2	2%	24	11%	11	9%
Somewhat	426	39	273	41	27	28	94	44	32	26
Very little	419	38	245	37	47	49	70	32	57	46
Not at all	143	13	69	10	21	22	28	13	25	20
Total	1,100	100	662	99	97	101	216	100	125	101

Note: The percentages for each area type may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 39: Jurisdictions Reporting Effect of Gang-Involved Adults Returning From Prison on Youth Gangs, by Region, 1998

Effect	All Regions		Midwest		Northeast		South		West	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Very much	112	10%	26	8%	9	8%	34	10%	43	14%
Somewhat	426	39	119	37	37	34	125	35	145	47
Very little	419	38	131	40	39	36	152	42	97	32
Not at all	143	13	50	15	23	21	48	13	22	7
Total	1,100	100	326	100	108	99	359	100	307	100

Note: The percentages for each region may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 39 shows that adults returning from prison have had a far greater impact on youth gangs in the West than in other regions. Combined "very much" and "somewhat" responses for the four regions were: West (61 percent), Midwest (45 percent), South (also 45 percent), and Northeast (42 percent).

Task force or multiagency collaboration

Respondents reporting youth gang problems in their jurisdiction in 1998 were asked whether their agency participated in a formal multiagency task force or collaborative effort that focused on youth gang problems as a major concern. Table 40 shows that about one-half (49 percent) of all respondents said yes. Two-thirds of jurisdictions reporting involvement in task forces were in large cities (403 of the 612 total). Table 41 shows that task forces were more prevalent in the West (59 percent) and least prevalent in the South (42 percent).

Table 42 shows that the prevalence of task forces varied by region and area type. For all area types, task forces were much more common in the West than in other regions (except for large cities in the South). Regardless of region, more than one-half of respondents from large cities reported having a task force. Thus, task forces were far more common in large cities.

Table 40: Jurisdictions Reporting Youth Gang Task Force Collaboration, by Area Type, 1998

	All Area Types		Large City		Small City		Suburban County		Rural County	
Collaboration	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	612	49%	403	56%	49	42%	117	45%	43	31%
No	626	51	321	44	68	58	142	55	95	69
Total	1,238	100	724	100	117	100	259	100	138	100

Note: The percentages for each area type may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 41: Jurisdictions Reporting Youth Gang Task Force Collaboration, by Region, 1998

	All Regions		Midwest		Northeast		South		West	
Collaboration	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	612	49%	183	50%	62	48%	175	42%	192	59%
No	626	51	185	50	67	52	242	58	132	41
Total	1,238	100	368	100	129	100	417	100	324	100

Note: The percentages for each region may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 42: Jurisdictions Reporting Youth Gang Task Force Collaboration, by Area Type and Region, 1998

	All Regions		Midwest		Northeast		South		West	
Collaboration	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Large city										
Yes	403	56%	105	52%	55	55%	115	58%	128	58%
No	321	44	99	49	45	45	84	42	93	42
Small city										
Yes	49	42	21	45	3	17	8	29	17	71
No	68	58	26	55	15	83	20	71	7	29
Suburban county										
Yes	117	45	38	54	4	40	40	31	35	69
No	142	55	32	46	6	60	88	69	16	31
Rural county										
Yes	43	31	19	40			12	19	12	43
No	95	69	28	60	1	100	50	81	16	57

Note: The percentages for each category may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

Respondents reporting task force involvement in 1998 were also asked about other entities participating in the task force.

Respondents reporting task force involvement in 1998 were also asked about other entities participating in the task force. Table 43 shows that 9 out of 10 respondents reported linkage with another police or sheriff's department and some other criminal justice agency. The next most common participants in task forces were some other government entity (43 percent) and schools (42 percent), followed by community-based organizations or citizen groups (only 19 percent). However, as shown in table 44, task forces in large cities had a much broader range of participating agencies than task forces in other area types. In addition to other law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, large-city task

Table 43: Jurisdictions Reporting Types of Youth Gang Task Force Participants, 1998

Type of Participant	Agencies Reporting	
	Number	Percent
Other police or sheriff's department	550	90%
Other criminal justice agency	544	89
Other government entity	262	43
School	255	42
Religious institution	60	10
Private social service agency	61	10
Community-based or citizens group	119	19
Private corporation	39	6
Other	17	3

Note: Participants were identified by the 612 responding agencies that reported task force involvement.

Table 44: Jurisdictions Reporting Types of Youth Gang Task Force Participants, by Area Type, 1998

Type of Participant	All Area Types		Large City		Small City		Suburban County		Rural County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Other police or sheriff's department	550	100%	357	65%	45	8%	112	20%	36	7%
Other criminal justice agency	54	101	367	68	42	8	99	18	36	7
Other government entity	262	101	181	69	13	5	51	20	17	7
School	255	101	162	64	16	6	55	22	22	9
Religious institution	60	100	11	18	40	67	5	8	4	7
Private social service agency	61	101	42	69	5	8	7	12	7	12
Community-based or citizens group	119	101	72	61	7	6	28	24	12	10
Private corporation	39	101	28	72	0	0	10	26	1	3
Other	17	101	11	65	0	0	4	24	2	12

Note: The percentages for each area type may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

forces were likely to include a private corporation (72 percent), some other government entity (69 percent), private social service agencies (69 percent), schools (64 percent), and a community-based organization or citizen group (61 percent). It is interesting to note that 67 percent of small-city respondents reported that religious institutions participated in local task forces.

Defining youth gangs

As noted in the "Methodology" section, definitions continue to pose problems in evaluating youth gang activity on a national level. To address these problems, the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey asked respondents about the characteristics they consider important in defining a youth gang. The survey also provided respondents with an alternative definition of gangs and asked them what percentage of gangs in their jurisdictions would fall within this definition. The response to these questions is discussed below.

Youth gangs' defining characteristics

Identifying the characteristics that define a youth gang is difficult because individual law enforcement agencies think differently about gangs, in terms of each agency's own laws, language, observations, and experiences. This problem can be magnified when agencies lack a formal written definition and even more so when defining characteristics vary among units within law enforcement agencies. To better understand how law enforcement agencies characterize gangs, the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey asked respondents to rank six gang characteristics according to their importance as criteria in defining a youth gang, with 1 indicating the most important criterion and 6 indicating the least important.

Table 45 lists the six characteristics and shows the number and percentage of first-place selections each received as a criterion for defining a gang. Although none received an overwhelming majority of votes as most important, "commits crimes together" clearly was the most important criterion, receiving a first-place selection by 50 percent of the respondents. The next most popular characteristic, "has a name," was ranked most important by only 19 percent of the respondents.

Tables 46 and 47 permit further analysis of how agencies use the six characteristics to define youth gangs. Table 46 presents a frequency analysis for the six characteristics, showing the number of respondents who selected each characteristic as most important (i.e., the frequency of choice 1), second most important (frequency of choice 2), and so forth. The table also shows the "spread" for each characteristic, that is, the difference between the frequencies of choice 1 and choice 6. Table 47 then lists the frequency sequences for each characteristic. For example, the characteristic "commits crimes together" was choice 1 for 613 respondents, choice 2 for 166, choice 3 for 161, choice 4 for 113, choice 5 for 122, and choice 6 for 46. The spread for that characteristic is 567. The frequency sequence is 1–2–3–5–4–6.

The 1998 National Youth Gang Survey asked respondents about the characteristics they consider important in defining a youth gang.

The gang characteristics "commits crimes together" and "has a name" both received substantially more rankings of 1 (most important) than the other characteristics.

Table 45: Criteria Used by Law Enforcement Agencies To Define a Youth Gang: Top Choices, 1998

Gang Characteristic	Agencies Selecting As Most Important Criterion	
	Number	Percent
Commits crimes together	613	50%
Has a name	228	19
Hangs out together	119	10
Claims a turf or territory of some sort	104	9
Displays/wears common colors or other insignia	101	8
Has a leader or several leaders	89	7

Note: Number of observations=1,221.

Table 46: Criteria Used by Law Enforcement Agencies To Define a Youth Gang: Analysis of Choices, 1998

Gang Characteristic	Choice						Spread
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Commits crimes together	*613*	166	161	113	122	46	567
Has a name	228	185	175	219	208	206	53
Has a leader or several leaders	89	186	255	252	247	192	166
Hangs out together	119	215	232	252	210	192	133
Displays/wears common colors or other insignia	101	193	230	214	*243*	240	142
Claims a turf or territory	104	270	176	150	187	*324*	220

Note: For each characteristic, the table shows the number of respondents ranking the characteristic as choice 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 in order of importance as a criterion for defining a gang. These numbers indicate the frequency for each ranking. The spread is the difference between the highest and lowest frequencies. The highest frequency for each characteristic is shown in italic.

"Commits crimes together" and "has a name" both received substantially more rankings of 1 (most important) than the other characteristics. As noted earlier, "commits crimes together" had primary importance, with one-half of all respondents assigning it a 1. The relevance of this characteristic is clear: its highest frequency (choice 1) is very high; its lowest frequency (choice 6) is very low; its spread is, therefore, very large (567 votes); and its frequency sequence, noted in the example above, is almost in straight numeric order. The relevance of "having a name" is less clear: the frequency spread for this characteristic is very small (only 53 votes), which means that the six ranking choices received almost equal numbers of votes.

Table 47: Criteria Used by Law Enforcement Agencies To Define a Youth Gang: Summary of Rankings, 1998

Gang Characteristic	Ranking					
Commits crimes together	1	2	3	5	4	6
Has a name	1	4	5	6	2	3
Has a leader or several leaders	3	4	5	6	2	1
Hangs out together	4	3	2	5	6	1
Displays/wears common colors or other insignia	5	6	3	4	2	1
Claims a turf or territory of some sort	6	2	5	3	4	1

Note: For each characteristic, the table summarizes the frequency with which respondents ranked the characteristic as choice 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 as a criterion for defining a gang. The sequence of numbers indicates the frequency of each ranking. For example, the most frequent ranking for the characteristic "has a name" was first choice, and the least frequent ranking was third choice.

For other characteristics, table 47 shows that the ranking choices receiving the most votes were as follows: "has a leader or several leaders" (choice 3), "hangs out together" (choice 4), "displays or wears common colors or other insignia" (choice 5), and "claims a turf or territory" (choice 6). It is puzzling that choice 6 was most popular for "claims a turf or territory." This indicates that a majority of respondents thought of this as the least important criterion in defining a gang. However, a closer look in table 46 reveals that the next most common ranking for this characteristic was choice 2 and that the difference in votes between choices 2 and 6 (54) was negligible. Although many respondents considered this characteristic least important, almost as many considered it quite important. This contradiction points to a lack of agreement on how to identify a gang.

The data indicate that these characteristics all play a part in defining a gang. That "committing crimes together" emerged as a very important criterion could be attributed to the fact that the respondents are law enforcement officials. However, this characteristic was selected as most important by only one-half of the respondents. The lack of agreement on gang characteristics is further illustrated in respondents' answers to the second part of the question on gang characteristics, in which they were asked to list any other characteristics their agencies considered important in defining a youth gang.

Several answers addressed the minimum number of gang members, which varied from only two to at least five. Some agencies looked for structure and leadership to identify gangs; others looked for a lack of leadership. Another theme several respondents mentioned was the physical appearance of gang members (e.g., tattoos, similar haircuts, and similar style of dress) or their automobiles (e.g., driving the same kind of automobile and having the same markings on their automobiles). Another common group of characteristics involved factors such as attitude, antisocial or intimidating behavior, development of a language, or a common set of beliefs. Some agencies identified a youth as a gang member if the youth corresponded with, was friends with, or had a picture taken with a known gang member.

The data indicate that these characteristics all play a part in defining a gang.

In an attempt to determine the effect of various youth gang definitions on responses, an alternative definition of "youth gang" was tested in the 1998 survey.

The survey findings reported in this section make it clear that law enforcement agencies use a wide variety of characteristics—not just committing crimes together—to define youth gangs. The findings also suggest an opportunity for further research in this area. The next section analyzes responses to the survey question regarding the applicability of an alternative definition of youth gangs. That analysis sheds some light on the findings presented here.

Alternative definition of youth gangs

In an attempt to determine the effect of various youth gang definitions on responses, an alternative definition of "youth gang" was tested in the 1998 survey. The alternative definition was devised by an eminent gang researcher, Malcolm Klein. The objective was to see whether the alternative definition helped specify the criteria law enforcement agencies use to identify youth gangs. Respondents were asked what percentage of the youth gangs they had reported would fit Klein's alternative definition:

> A group of youths or young adults in your jurisdiction whose involvement in illegal activities over months or years marks them in their own view and in the view of the community and police as different from most other youthful groups. Do not include motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, or other exclusively adult gangs.

This alternative definition is very similar to the one that respondents were instructed to use in the 1996–98 National Youth Gang Surveys: "a group of youths or young adults in [the respondent's] jurisdiction that [the respondent] or other responsible persons in [the respondent's] agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a 'gang.'" As in the alternative definition, the original definition instructed survey respondents to exclude motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, and exclusively adult gangs. There is, however, one important difference between the two definitions. The alternative definition specifies gang involvement in "illegal" activities, whereas the original definition does not.

Because of the similarity of the two definitions, it is not surprising that respondents who reported gang problems said that nearly 8 out of 10 (79 percent) of the gangs they had reported under the original definition would fit the alternative definition. Many agencies (546, or 54 percent of all agencies responding to the question) reported that 100 percent of their gangs met the alternative definition. Most of the 21-percent difference likely is accounted for by the fact that, as reported in the previous section, law enforcement agencies use a broad set of criteria in defining gangs. One hundred and five agencies (10 percent) reported that none of their gangs met the alternative definition. Although involvement in criminal activities is the predominant criterion, it is not the only one.

Indeed, although law enforcement agencies might not perceive some youth gangs as involved in illegal activity, such gangs are nevertheless an important matter of concern because of their potential criminal involvement. Surveys of students have found that many gangs identified by students are not particularly active in serious and violent crimes.

In a recent national survey of students ages 12–19, more than one-third (37 percent) reported gangs at their schools (Howell and Lynch, 2000). Although about two-thirds of the surveyed students reported that gangs at school were involved in one or more of three types of illegal activity (violence, drug sales, or gun carrying), 40 percent of the students said gangs were involved in only one of these types of activity. About one in five students (21 percent) said gangs were involved in two of the measured activities, and just 8 percent said they were involved in all three types of activity. Thus, only a small fraction of the students surveyed said gangs were highly active in all three types of serious criminal activity.[5]

Curry's (2000) 5-year followup study of self-reported gang members among young students (grades 6–8) found continuity between gang membership at young ages and later police records. About one-half of the young gang members had subsequent police records, and about 20 percent of them were eventually identified by police as gang-related offenders. Thus, Curry argues, gangs and gang members identified in student surveys are not a separate gang problem from that indicated in law enforcement data.

Because only a small fraction of student-affiliated youth gangs may be highly active in serious and violent crimes, law enforcement agencies may be reporting only a portion of gangs and gang members that are actually present in schools. Analyses of the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey data show that within youth gangs, adult members (i.e., those age 18 or older) were more heavily involved in criminal activity than were juveniles (age 17 or younger), with the exceptions of burglary/breaking and entering and larceny/theft. Much of the 21-percent difference between the number of gangs reported under the original National Youth Gang Survey definition and the number reported under the alternative definition might well be accounted for by younger adolescent gangs that are not yet extensively involved in criminal activity. Curry concluded that although student survey data and official law enforcement data do not coincide perfectly, together they can produce a picture of gang activity that contributes to a better understanding of youth involvement in gangs over time.

Tables 48 and 49 show responses to the question on the alternative definition, by area type and region. There was very little variation by area type. This is surprising given that other 1998 survey results based on the original National Youth Gang Survey definition showed less gang and gang member involvement in serious and violent crime in small cities and rural areas (with the exception of gang member involvement in drug sales). There were, however, regional differences, which may be a function of State definitions of gangs that emphasize involvement in illegal activity. The strongest correspondence between gangs reported under the original and alternative definitions (84 percent) was in the West. This may be explained by the proliferation in this region of the California STEP Act gang definition, which emphasizes that "criminal street gangs" have as one of their primary activities the commission of criminal activities (Klein, 1995:28).

The section on youth gang defining characteristics noted that survey findings suggest an opportunity for further research in this area. The findings on an alternative definition also point to the need for more research on the criteria law enforcement agencies and others use to define youth gangs.

The strongest correspondence between gangs reported under the original and alternative definitions was in the West.

In 1998, there were an estimated 28,700 youth gangs and 780,200 gang members active in the United States.

Table 48: Responses to the Alternative Definition of Youth Gangs, by Area Type, 1998

Area Type	Gangs by Original Definition	Gangs by Alternative Definition		
		Number	Percentage of Original	*n**
Large city	9,866	7,876	80%	606
Small city	282	214	76	86
Suburban county	3,898	2,980	76	205
Rural county	383	293	77	105
Total	14,429	11,363	79	1,002

*n=number of observations.

Table 49: Responses to the Alternative Definition of Youth Gangs, by Region, 1998

Region	Gangs by Original Definition	Gangs by Alternative Definition		
		Number	Percentage of Original	*n**
Midwest	2,611	1,892	72%	292
Northeast	795	646	81	100
South	4,680	3,491	75	346
West	6,343	5,334	84	264
Total	14,429	11,363	79	1,002

*n=number of observations.

Summary

In 1998, 48 percent of all respondents experienced youth gang activity, down about 3 percent from 1997 and about 5 percent from 1996, when 53 percent of all respondents reported active youth gangs.

The modest decline between 1997 and 1998 in jurisdictions reporting gangs was 2 percent for large cities, 6 percent for suburban counties, 1 percent for small cities, and 3 percent for rural counties. Most of the nationwide decrease in jurisdictions reporting gangs occurred in large suburban counties (population of 250,000 or more).

All cities with populations of 250,000 or more reported gangs in all 3 years (1996–98), and the percentage of respondents in cities with populations between 100,000 and 249,999 reporting gangs increased slightly from 1996 to 1998 (from 91 percent to 93 percent).

In 1998, there were an estimated 28,700 youth gangs and 780,200 gang members active in the United States (down from an estimated 30,500 gangs and

816,000 gang members in 1997 and 31,000 gangs and 846,000 gang members in 1996). From 1996 to 1998, the estimated number of gangs and gang members in the United States decreased modestly (7 percent and 8 percent, respectively).

Between 1997 and 1998, the estimated number of youth gangs decreased by 2 percent in large cities, 1 percent in suburban counties, 13 percent in small cities, and 9 percent in rural counties. During the same period, the estimated number of gang members remained virtually unchanged in large cities and decreased 3 percent in small cities and 15 percent in suburban counties. Counter to the overall trend for 1997–98, the number of gang members increased 3 percent in rural counties.

In small cities, the number of youth gangs and gang members increased from 1996 to 1997 and decreased from 1997 to 1998. A mixed pattern was seen in rural counties, where the number of gangs decreased but the number of gang members increased in both 1997 and 1998.

From 1996 to 1998, the largest drop in the number of youth gangs occurred in suburban counties (–24 percent), followed by rural counties (–13 percent). The largest drop in the number of gang members occurred in suburban counties (–21 percent), followed by large cities (–6 percent). Counter to the nationwide trend for 1996–98, the number of gang members increased 43 percent in rural counties and 3 percent in small cities.

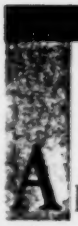
Almost one-half (44 percent) of all youth gangs in 1998 were in cities with populations of 25,000 or more. Nearly two-thirds of all gang members (62 percent) were in these cities.

In 1998, most respondents believed their youth gang problem was staying about the same (42 percent), 28 percent believed the problem was getting worse, and 30 percent believed it was getting better. Compared with 1997, more respondents perceived that their gang problem was getting better. Nevertheless, more than two-thirds of 1998 respondents believed their gang problem was either staying about the same or getting worse.

The age distribution of youth gang members in 1998 was as follows: younger than 15 (11 percent), 15–17 (29 percent), 18–24 (46 percent), and older than 24 (14 percent). Respondents estimated that 60 percent of the gang members in their jurisdictions were adults (age 18 or older). This represents a significant shift in the age of gang members since 1996, when respondents estimated that exactly one-half of their gang members were adults. Thus, it appears that youth gangs may be aging.

Adult gang members were far more prevalent in large cities and suburban counties than in small cities and rural counties. The South stands out as the region in which juvenile gang members were most prevalent in both small cities (76 percent) and large cities (48 percent). Adults were most predominant in large cities in the West (67 percent).

Nationally in 1998, 92 percent of youth gang members were male and 8 percent were female. A total of 171 jurisdictions reported female-dominated (more than 50 percent female) gangs. Female-dominated gangs represented 1.76 percent of



Almost one-half of all youth gangs in 1998 were in cities with populations of 25,000 or more. Nearly two-thirds of all gang members were in these cities.

Serious gang crimes are no longer confined to large cities.

all gangs and were most prevalent in the largest jurisdictions. The South reported the largest number of female-dominated gangs.

Nationally in 1998, 46 percent of all gang members were Hispanic, 34 percent were African American, 12 percent were Caucasian, 6 percent were Asian, and 2 percent were of other race/ethnicity. From 1996 to 1998, the proportion of Hispanic and Asian gang members increased slightly, and the proportion of Caucasian and African American gang members decreased slightly.

Hispanic was the predominant racial/ethnic group among youth gang members in large cities (47 percent of all gang members), suburban counties (47 percent), and small cities (46 percent), and African American was the predominant racial/ethnic group in rural counties (36 percent). African American gang members were predominant in the Midwest and Northeast, and Hispanic gang members were predominant in the South and West.

Caucasian gang members were most prevalent in small cities in the Midwest (49 percent) and Northeast (47 percent), were rather prevalent in all small cities (30 percent) and all rural counties (27 percent), and were a majority in Midwestern rural counties (55 percent).

Respondents estimated that more than one-third (36 percent) of their youth gangs had a significant mixture of two or more racial/ethnic groups. The largest proportion of these "mixed gangs" was in small cities, where they represented 54 percent of all gangs, and the smallest proportion was in large cities (32 percent). The proportion of mixed gangs was larger in the Midwest than in any other region.

Gang-related homicides are a serious problem. Nearly one-half (45 percent) of cities with populations of 25,000 or more that experienced a gang problem during the 3-year period 1996–98 reported a gang homicide in at least 1 year. About one-half (49 percent) of the cities that consistently indicated gang problems reported decreases in gang homicides over the 3-year period, 15 percent reported they stayed the same, and 36 percent reported an increase.

Respondents were asked to estimate the proportion of youth gang members who engaged in certain types of serious and violent crimes. The percentage of respondents reporting involvement of most or all gang members was largest for drug sales (27 percent), followed by larceny/theft (17 percent), burglary/breaking and entering (13 percent), aggravated assault (12 percent), motor vehicle theft (11 percent), and robbery (3 percent).

Serious gang crimes are no longer confined to large cities. Gang members' involvement in aggravated assault and robbery was greatest in large cities, but their involvement in motor vehicle theft, larceny/theft, and drug sales was greatest in suburban counties. Surprisingly, the largest proportion of gang members involved in burglary/breaking and entering was reported in rural counties, followed closely by suburban counties, then large cities. Gang members in small cities and rural counties also were extensively involved in drug sales and property crimes.

The survey revealed significant regional differences in the prevalence of gang member involvement in various serious and violent crimes. Compared with national averages, gang members in the Northeast had higher than average involvement in robbery, aggravated assault, and drug sales. Gang members in the Midwest were involved at a level higher than the national average in only one offense: drug sales. Gang members in the West had the highest level of all regions in motor vehicle theft and the lowest level of all regions in drug sales. Gang members in the South had much higher than average involvement in burglary/breaking and entering (highest level of all regions) and high levels for all other offenses.

Nationwide, more than one-half (53 percent) of respondents said gang members in their jurisdiction used firearms in assault crimes "often" or "sometimes." Only 16 percent said their gang members did not use firearms in conjunction with assaults. Firearms were used far more often in large cities and suburban counties than in small cities and rural counties. Even in rural counties, one-third of respondents said firearms were used often or sometimes.

Nationwide, more than one-half of respondents said gang members in their jurisdiction used firearms in assault crimes "often" or "sometimes."

One-third (34 percent) of all youth gangs were drug gangs (i.e., gangs organized specifically for the purpose of trafficking in drugs). Unexpectedly, drug gangs were most prevalent in rural counties, where 38 percent of the youth gangs were said to be drug gangs. Drug gangs were far more prevalent in the Northeast (60 percent of all youth gangs), followed by the Midwest (46 percent). In the West, where gang drug trafficking has historically been viewed as very prevalent, drug gangs surprisingly were less prevalent than in any other region (only 18 percent of all gangs).

Respondents were asked how much their jurisdiction's youth gang problem has been affected in the past few years by the return of gang-involved adults who have been in prison. The most common response was "somewhat" (39 percent). Nearly one-half (49 percent) said either very much or somewhat, 10 percent said very much, and 13 percent said not at all. Suburban counties were most affected, and jurisdictions in the West reported a far greater impact of gang-involved adults returning from prison than was reported by jurisdictions in other regions.

Respondents in gang problem jurisdictions were asked whether their agency participated in a formal multiagency task force or collaborative effort that focused on youth gang problems as a major concern. About one-half (49 percent) of all respondents said yes. Task forces were most prevalent in large cities across the country and in all types of jurisdictions in the West.

Nearly all task forces involved only law enforcement and/or other criminal justice agencies. In 9 out of 10 cases, respondents reported linkage with another police or sheriff's department and some other criminal justice agency. The next most common participants in task forces were some other government entity (43 percent) and schools (42 percent), followed by community-based organizations or citizen groups (only 19 percent).

NYGC will continue to analyze these data, and subsequent surveys will gather additional information in areas that require further examination. Other researchers also will have access to the NYGC database for analysis.

Endnotes

1. See *1995 National Youth Gang Survey* (National Youth Gang Center, 1997) for a detailed explanation of the methodology used to compile the sample for the 1995 survey.

2. A list of cities and their populations was obtained from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. A list of agencies whose jurisdictions are considered suburban counties and rural counties was obtained from *Crime in the United States, 1994: Uniform Crime Reports*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1995, pp. 167–189. The terms "large cities" and "small cities" were assigned to the two groups of cities used in the sample for ease of reference. However, most cities in the "large cities" group have populations under 100,000 and may not be considered large cities by most observers.

3. For its own purposes, the Bureau of the Census sometimes divides cities and towns into segments. However, for the purposes of this survey, the entire population of each city and town was used.

4. Another possibility, of course, is an increase in older juveniles and young adults joining gangs. This is very unlikely, however, because almost all youth who join gangs do so in the adolescent period, by age 15 (Battin et al., 1998).

5. The survey did not measure involvement in other kinds of illegal activity.

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National Youth Gang Center

As part of its comprehensive, coordinated response to America's gang problem, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) funds the National Youth Gang Center (NYGC). NYGC assists State and local jurisdictions in the collection, analysis, and exchange of information on gang-related demographics, legislation, literature, research, and promising program strategies. NYGC coordinates activities of the OJJDP Gang Consortium, a group of Federal agencies, gang program representatives, and service providers that works to coordinate gang information and programs. NYGC also provides training and technical assistance for OJJDP's Rural Gang, Gang-Free Schools, and Gang-Free Communities Initiatives. For more information, contact:

National Youth Gang Center
P.O. Box 12729
Tallahassee, FL 32317
800–446–0912
850–386–5356 (fax)
E-mail: nygc@iir.com
Internet: www.iir.com/nygc

Appendix A: 1998 National Youth Gang Survey Form for the Representative Sample

Your agency has been selected to furnish information for the **1998 National Youth Gang Survey.** Your answers statistically represent those of hundreds of other law enforcement agencies that will not be surveyed—so your response is very important. **Please return the survey by March 26, 1999.**

Please return the completed survey form by fax or by mail to:

National Youth Gang Center
Institute for Intergovernmental Research
Post Office Box 12729
Tallahassee, FL 32317–2729
Telephone Number: (800) 446–0912
Fax Number: (888) 323–7305 *(This is a toll-free number.)*

Survey Instructions

1. Please report data for **Calendar Year 1998** (January 1 through December 31).
2. For the purpose of this survey, a "youth gang" is defined as: *a group of youths or young adults in your jurisdiction that you or other responsible persons in your agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a "gang."* **Do not** include motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, or other exclusively adult gangs. Please base your responses on your records, your personal knowledge, and/or consultations with other agency personnel who are familiar with youth gangs.
3. Police departments should report only for their city/town.
4. Sheriff's departments should report **only for their unincorporated service area. Please exclude any contracted jurisdictions.**

Agency Information

1. Name of Jurisdiction(s) Served (City, Town, or County): _____
2. Law Enforcement Agency Name: _____
3. Agency Mailing Address:

   Street: _____

   City: _____ County: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
4. Name of Person Completing Survey:

   First Name: _____ MI: ____ Last Name: _____
5. Title/Rank: _____

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6. Unit or Section: _____

7. Telephone Number, with Area Code: _____ - _____ - _____

8. Fax Number, with Area Code: _____ - _____ - _____

Survey Questions

PLEASE NOTE: *POLICE DEPARTMENTS* SHOULD REPORT ONLY FOR THEIR CITY/TOWN. *SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENTS* SHOULD REPORT ONLY FOR THEIR UNINCORPORATED SERVICE AREA. PLEASE EXCLUDE ANY CONTRACTED JURISDICTIONS.

1. During **1998,** were any youth gangs active in the city, town, or county served by your agency?

   Yes **No** **Do not know**

IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO QUESTION 1, PLEASE CONTINUE.

IF YOU ANSWERED "NO" or "DO NOT KNOW" TO QUESTION 1, THAT COMPLETES THE SURVEY. PLEASE RETURN THE FORM BY MAIL OR FAX.

2. How many youth **gangs** (as defined in the Survey Instructions) were active in your jurisdiction during **1998**?

   Number of active youth gangs _____ **Do not know**

3. What was the total number of active youth **gang members** in your jurisdiction during **1998**? An active gang member is defined as someone who was involved in gang activity with other gang members during **1998**.

   Number of active youth gang members _____ **Do not know**

4a. What is the percentage of all the youth **gang members** reported in **Question 3** who are:

   Male _____% **Female** _____% **Do not know**

4b. What percentage of the youth **gangs** reported in **Question 2** are made up entirely or mostly (more than 50%) of females?

   Female youth gangs _____% **Do not know**

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5a. Considering all the youth **gang members** reported in **Question 3**, what is your estimate of the percentage who are:

Age	Percentage
under 15	_____%
15–17	_____%
18–24	_____%
over 24	_____%
Do not know	

5b. How much has your jurisdiction's youth gang problem been affected in the past few years by the return of adult gang-involved inmates from prison?

Very much

Somewhat

Very little

Not at all

Do not know

6a. Listed below are terms often used to describe the race/ethnicity of youth gangs and gang members. For your jurisdiction, what percentage of all youth **gang members** reported in Question 3 do you estimate are:

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
African American/black	_____%
Hispanic/Latino	_____%
Caucasian/white	_____%
Asian	_____%
Other	_____% **(Please identify)** _____
Do not know	

6b. Some youth gangs are comprised almost exclusively of one racial/ethnic group. Others are more mixed. What percentage of the youth **gangs** reported in **Question 2** have a significant mixture of two or more racial/ethnic groups?

Racially mixed youth gangs _____% **Do not know**

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Questions 7–9 ask about crimes committed by youth gang members. For the purpose of this survey, gang crime is defined as:

***Member-based*—A crime in which a gang member(s) is either the perpetrator or the victim, regardless of the motive; or**

***Motive-based*—A crime committed by a gang member(s) in which the underlying reason is to further the interests and activities of the gang.**

7. Which of these gang crime definitions does your agency most frequently use?

   Member-based

   Motive-based

   Other (Please define): _____

   _____

8. How many **member-based** homicides involving youth gang members do you estimate occurred in your jurisdiction during **1998**?

   ***Number* of member-based homicides** _____ **Do not know**

9. Of the number of **member-based** homicides you indicated in **Question 8,** how many **motive-based** homicides involving youth gang members do you estimate occurred in your jurisdiction during **1998**?

   ***Number* of motive-based homicides** _____ **Do not know**

10. How often did youth **gang members** use firearms in assaultive crimes in your jurisdiction during **1998**?

    Used often

    Used sometimes

    Used rarely

    Not used

    Do not know

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11. Please estimate the proportion of youth **gang members** who engaged in the following offenses in your jurisdiction during **1998.** *(Please circle your response.)*

	None (0%)	Few (1%–25%)	Some (26%–74%)	Most/All (75%–100%)
Aggravated Assault	None	Few	Some	Most/All
Robbery	None	Few	Some	Most/All
Burglary/Breaking and Entering	None	Few	Some	Most/All
Motor Vehicle Theft	None	Few	Some	Most/All
Larceny/Theft	None	Few	Some	Most/All
Drug Sales	None	Few	Some	Most/All

12a. During **1998,** did your agency participate in a formal multiagency task force or collaborative effort that focused on youth gang problems as a major concern?

Yes **No** **Do not know**

12b. Please name the task force or collaborative effort: _____

_____

12c. If you answered **"Yes"** to **12a,** which of the entities listed below were included?

- **Other police or sheriff's department**
- **Other criminal justice agency** (federal or state law enforcement, court, prosecution, public defense, probation, parole, corrections, juvenile justice, etc.)
- **Other government entity** (federal or state social service agency, U.S. or state legislature, city or county government, etc.)
- **School** (state or local school board, local school, college, university, etc.)
- **Religious institution** (church, synagogue, mosque, etc.)
- **Private social service agency**
- **Community-based/citizens group**
- **Private corporation**
- **Other** *(Please identify)* _____

_____

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13. Drug gangs are groups organized specifically for the purpose of trafficking drugs. What percentage of the youth **gangs** reported in **Question 2** would you consider drug gangs?

Drug gangs _____% **Do not know**

14a. In order to clarify which elements of a "youth gang" your agency feels are important, please rank (from 1 to 6, with "1" being most important and "6" being least important) the following characteristics of a "youth gang" in terms of their importance in how your agency defines a youth gang:

_____**It has a name**

_____**It has a leader or several leaders**

_____**The group hangs out together**

_____**The group displays or wears common colors or other insignia**

_____**The group commits crimes together**

_____**The group claims a turf or territory of some sort**

14b. Please list any other characteristics of a "youth gang" that are important in how your agency defines a "youth gang": _____

_____

_____

15. At the beginning of this survey, we gave you one definition of a "youth gang." Below is another definition:

"A group of youths or young adults in your jurisdiction whose involvement in illegal activities over months or years marks them in their own view and in the view of the community and police as different from most other youthful groups. Do not include motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, or other exclusively adult gangs."

What percentage of the youth **gangs** reported in **Question 2** would meet the criteria of this modified definition?

Youth gangs using modified definition _____% **Do not know**

16. Compared to 1997, was your youth gang problem in **1998**:

Getting worse?

Getting better?

Staying about the same?

Do not know

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Appendix B: Abbreviated 1998 National Youth Gang Survey Form for the Comparative Sample

In the 1995, 1996, and 1997 National Youth Gang Surveys, your agency furnished information that contributed to a better understanding of the scope of youth gang problems in the United States. We ask you to update the data for 1998 by answering the questions on page 2.

Survey Instructions

1. Please report data for **Calendar Year 1998** (January 1 through December 31).
2. For the purpose of this survey, a "youth gang" is defined as: *a group of youths or young adults in your jurisdiction that you or other responsible persons in your agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a "gang."* **Do not** include motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, or other exclusively adult gangs. Please base your responses on your records, your personal knowledge, and/or consultations with other agency personnel who are familiar with youth gangs.
3. Police departments should report only for their city/town.
4. Sheriff's departments should report **only for their unincorporated service area. Please exclude any contracted jurisdictions.**

Please return the completed survey form by March 15, 1999, via fax or mail to:

National Youth Gang Center
Institute for Intergovernmental Research
Post Office Box 12729
Tallahassee, FL 32317–2729
Telephone Number: (800) 446–0912
Fax Number: (888) 323–7305 *(This is a toll-free number.)*

Agency Information

1. Name of Jurisdiction(s) Served (City, Town, *or* County): _____
2. Law Enforcement Agency Name: _____

   Agency Mailing Address:

   Street: _____

   City: _____ County: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
3. Name of Person Completing Survey:

   First Name: _____ MI: ____ Last Name: _____

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4. Title/Rank: _____

5. Unit or Section: _____

6. Telephone Number, with Area Code: _____ -_____-_____

7. Fax Number, with Area Code: _____ -_____-_____

Survey Questions

1. During **1998,** were any youth gangs active in the city, town, or county served by your agency?

   Yes ☐ **No** ☐ **Do not know** ☐

2. In your jurisdiction in 1998, on the basis of records or your best estimate, what was the number of:

   Active Youth Gangs? _____ **Do not know** ☐

   Youth Gang Members? _____ **Do not know** ☐

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Appendix C: Random Sample Selection Methodology

Two random samples were constructed for the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey. The first was a random sample of cities and towns with populations between 2,500 and 25,000 (small cities) and the second was of rural counties. These samples were also used for the 1996 and 1997 National Youth Gang Surveys.

In previous surveys, the response rate for cities with populations of more than 150,000 has been as high as 91.3 percent. The response rate for cities with populations between 25,000 and 150,000 was estimated by using a random sample of municipalities in that size range that were surveyed as part of the 1994 National Institute of Justice survey conducted by Curry, Ball, and Decker (1996a, b, c). The response rate of those cities to the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey was estimated to be 74.5 percent. All of the above computations for the proposed sample size assumed a response rate of 75 percent.

The estimated required sample size n was derived by using the formula

$$n = \frac{t^2NPQ}{d^2(N-1) + t^2PQ}$$

Where:

t is the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area of α at the tails.
N is the true population size.
P is the true proportion of the population with a specific characteristic.
Q is the true proportion of the population without a specific characteristic or (1 – P).
d is an acceptable error of size that can be incurred at probability α.

This computing formula is derived from the formula provided by Cochran's *Sampling Techniques* (1977) for sample size n required for producing an error of size d at a specific probability α. Cochran uses t, the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area of α at the tails to produce the formula

$$n = \frac{\frac{t^2PQ}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N}\left(\frac{t^2PQ}{d^2} - 1\right)}$$

All the terms in the computing formula are presented in a form equivalent to those in Cochran's formula.

An error rate d was computed as 5 percent. The probability α of an estimated error being greater than d used in the computations above is .05. All computations are based on an estimated true population of $P = 0.5$ and $Q = 0.5$ because this results in the largest and most conservative estimates for required samples for each stratum.

Appendix D: Jurisdictions Reporting Active Youth Gangs in 1998

This list is not comprehensive. Jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs in 1998 listed for large cities and suburban counties include only those that responded to the survey. Jurisdictions reporting for small cities and rural counties were part of a random sample and statistically represent many other jurisdictions that had active youth gangs in 1998 but are unnamed. All States except Hawaii and Vermont reported gang problems in 1998. This does not mean that these two States do not have gang problems, because the survey is not designed to enumerate gangs State by State (see information on survey sample, p. 2).

Large Cities

Alabama

Anniston
Auburn
Birmingham
Decatur
Dothan
Huntsville
Mobile
Montgomery
Phenix City

Alaska

Anchorage
Fairbanks
Juneau

Arizona

Bullhead City
Chandler
Flagstaff
Gilbert
Glendale
Lake Havasu City
Mesa
Peoria
Phoenix
Prescott
Scottsdale
Sierra Vista
Tempe
Tucson
Yuma

Arkansas

Conway
Fort Smith
Hot Springs
Jacksonville
Little Rock
North Little Rock
Pine Bluff
Rogers
Springdale
West Memphis

California

Alameda
Alhambra
Anaheim
Antioch
Arcadia
Azusa
Bakersfield
Baldwin Park
Bell
Bell Gardens
Berkeley
Brea
Buena Park
Burbank
Burlingame
Carlsbad
Cathedral City
Ceres
Chico
Chino
Chula Vista
Claremont
Clovis
Compton
Concord
Costa Mesa
Covina
Culver City
Cypress
Daly City
Davis
East Palo Alto
El Cajon
El Centro
El Monte
Escondido
Eureka
Fairfield
Fontana
Fountain Valley
Fremont
Fresno
Fullerton
Garden Grove
Gardena
Gilroy
Glendale
Glendora
Hayward
Hemet
Huntington Beach
Huntington Park
Inglewood
Irvine
La Habra
La Verne
Livermore
Lodi
Lompoc
Long Beach
Los Altos
Los Angeles
Madera
Manteca
Maywood
Menlo Park
Merced
Milpitas
Modesto
Monrovia
Montclair
Morgan Hill
Mountain View
Napa
National City
Newark
Newport Beach
Novato
Oakland
Oceanside
Ontario
Orange
Oxnard
Palm Springs
Palo Alto
Paradise
Pasadena
Perris
Pittsburg
Placentia
Pleasant Hill
Pomona
Redding
Redlands
Redondo Beach
Redwood City
Rialto
Richmond
Riverside
Rohnert Park
Roseville
Sacramento
Salinas
San Bruno
San Diego
San Francisco

San Gabriel
San Jose
San Leandro
San Luis Obispo
San Mateo
San Pablo
San Rafael
Santa Ana
Santa Barbara
Santa Clara
Santa Cruz
Santa Maria
Santa Rosa
Seaside
South Gate
Stockton
Suisun City
Sunnyvale
Torrance
Tracy
Tulare
Tustin
Union City
Upland
Vacaville
Vallejo
Ventura
Visalia
Walnut Creek
Watsonville
West Covina
Whittier
Woodland
Yuba City

Colorado

Arvada
Aurora
Boulder
Broomfield
Colorado Springs
Denver
Englewood
Fort Collins
Grand Junction
Greeley
Lakewood
Loveland
Pueblo
Thornton
Wheat Ridge

Connecticut

Bridgeport
Bristol
Danbury
East Hartford
Groton
Meriden
Naugatuck
New Haven
Norwich
Shelton
Stamford
Stratford
Wallingford
Waterbury
West Hartford
West Haven

District of Columbia

Washington

Delaware

Dover
Wilmington

Florida

Boca Raton
Boynton Beach
Bradenton
Cape Coral
Clearwater
Coconut Creek
Davie
Delray Beach
Fort Lauderdale
Fort Myers
Fort Pierce
Hialeah
Hollywood
Jacksonville
Kissimmee
Lakeland
Largo
Lauderhill
Melbourne
Miami
Miami Beach
North Miami
North Miami Beach
Oakland Park
Ocala
Orlando
Palm Bay
Panama City
Pembroke Pines
Pensacola
Pinellas Park
Plantation
Pompano Beach
Port Orange
St. Petersburg
Sanford
Sarasota City
Tallahassee
Titusville
West Palm Beach

Georgia

Albany
Atlanta
Columbus
Macon
Rome City
Roswell
Savannah
Smyrna
Valdosta
Warner Robins

Idaho

Boise
Coeur d'Alene
Lewiston
Nampa
Pocatello
Twin Falls

Illinois

Addison
Alton
Arlington Heights
Aurora
Bartlett
Bloomington
Bolingbrook
Calumet City
Carbondale
Carol Stream
Chicago
Crystal Lake
De Kalb
Decatur
Dolton
Downers Grove
East St. Louis
Elgin
Elk Grove Village
Evanston
Freeport
Galesburg
Glendale Heights
Glenview
Granite City
Hanover Park
Harvey
Hoffman Estates
Joliet
Kankakee
Lombard
Maywood
Mount Prospect
Naperville
Niles
Normal
North Chicago
Oak Park
Palatine
Park Forest
Park Ridge
Peoria
Quincy
Rock Island
Rockford
Schaumburg
Skokie
Springfield
Streamwood
Tinley Park
Urbana
Waukegan
Wheaton

Indiana

Anderson
Columbus
East Chicago
Elkhart
Evansville
Gary
Goshen
Hammond
Indianapolis
Kokomo
Lawrence
Marion

Merrillville
Michigan City
Mishawaka
Muncie
New Albany
Richmond
South Bend

Iowa

Ames
Bettendorf
Burlington
Cedar Falls
Cedar Rapids
Clinton
Council Bluffs
Davenport
Des Moines
Dubuque
Iowa City
Mason City
Sioux City
Waterloo

Kansas

Emporia
Kansas City
Lawrence
Leavenworth
Lenexa
Olathe
Overland Park
Salina
Topeka
Wichita

Kentucky

Covington
Frankfort
Henderson
Louisville

Louisiana

Alexandria
Baton Rouge
Bossier City
Lafayette
Lake Charles
Monroe
New Iberia
New Orleans
Shreveport
Slidell

Maine

Lewiston
Portland

Maryland

Baltimore
Frederick
Gaithersburg

Massachusetts

Amherst
Billerica
Boston
Brookline
Chicopee
Dracut
Everett
Fitchburg
Holyoke
Leominster
Lynn
Malden
Marlboro
Methuen
Northampton
Peabody
Pittsfield
Saugus
Shrewsbury
Somerville
Springfield
Tewksbury
Wellesley
West Springfield
Westfield
Worcester

Michigan

Ann Arbor
Battle Creek
Bay City
Bloomfield Township
Burton
Chesterfield Township
Dearborn
Dearborn Heights
Detroit
Eastpointe
Farmington Hills
Flint
Flint Township
Grand Rapids
Holland
Inkster
Jackson
Kalamazoo
Kentwood
Lansing
Lincoln Park
Muskegon
Oak Park
Port Huron
Portage
Roseville
Saginaw
St. Clair Shores
Shelby Township
Southfield
Sterling Heights
Warren

Minnesota

Blaine
Brooklyn Center
Brooklyn Park
Burnsville
Coon Rapids
Cottage Grove
Duluth
Edina
Lakeville
Maplewood
Minneapolis
Moorhead
Plymouth
Richfield
Rochester
St. Cloud
St. Paul
Winona
Woodbury

Mississippi

Biloxi
Columbus
Greenville
Gulfport
Hattiesburg
Jackson
Pascagoula
Vicksburg

Missouri

Blue Springs
Cape Girardeau
Gladstone
Independence
Kansas City
Raytown
St. Louis
Springfield
University City

Montana

Great Falls
Missoula

Nebraska

Bellevue
Grand Island
Kearney
Lincoln
Omaha

Nevada

Henderson
Las Vegas
Reno
Sparks

New Hampshire

Derry

New Jersey

Atlantic City
Belleville
Brick Township
East Orange
Edison
Elizabeth
Fair Lawn
Fort Lee
Irvington
Jersey City
Kearny
Lakewood
Linden
New Brunswick
Newark
North Bergen
Orange Township
Passaic
Paterson
Perth Amboy
Piscataway Township
Trenton

Union
West New York

New Mexico
Alamogordo
Albuquerque
City of Santa Fe
Clovis
Farmington
Hobbs
Rio Rancho
Roswell

New York
Albany
Buffalo
Cicero
Clay
Hempstead
Jamestown
Long Beach
New York City
Rochester
Rockville
Rome
Schenectady
Syracuse
Troy
Vestal
Yonkers

North Carolina
Chapel Hill
Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Durham
Fayetteville
Gastonia
Greensboro
High Point
Jacksonville
Salisbury
Wilmington
Winston-Salem

North Dakota
Bismarck
Fargo
Grand Forks
Minot

Ohio
Akron
Brunswick
Canton
Cincinnati
Cleveland
Columbus
Dayton
East Cleveland
Euclid
Fairborn
Findlay
Hamilton
Huber Heights
Kent
Mansfield
Marion City
Mentor
Middletown
Shaker Heights
Springfield
Stow
Toledo
Westerville
Youngstown

Oklahoma
Broken Arrow
Edmond
Lawton
Midwest City
Moore
Norman
Oklahoma City
Shawnee
Stillwater
Tulsa

Oregon
Albany
Corvallis
Eugene
Hillsboro
Medford
Portland
Salem
Tigard

Pennsylvania
Allentown
Chester
Erie
Lower Paxton Township
Philadelphia
Pittsburgh
Plum Borough
Reading
Scranton
Upper Darby Township

Rhode Island
Coventry
Cranston
East Providence
Providence
West Warwick

South Carolina
Anderson
Beaufort
Bensalem Township
Goose Creek
Mount Pleasant
Myrtle Beach
North Charleston
Rock Hill
Spartanburg

South Dakota
Aberdeen
Rapid City
Sioux Falls

Tennessee
Bartlett
Chattanooga
Clarksville
Cleveland
Columbia
Cookeville
Kingsport
Knoxville
Memphis
Murfreesboro
Nashville

Texas
Abilene
Allen
Amarillo
Austin
Baytown
Beaumont
Bedford
Bryan
Carrollton
College Station
Conroe
Copperas Cove
Corpus Christi
De Soto
Del Rio
Denton
Duncanville
Edinburg
El Paso
Euless
Fort Worth
Garland
Grand Prairie
Grapevine
Haltom City
Houston
Huntsville
Irving
Killeen
La Porte
Lake Jackson
Laredo
Longview
Lubbock
Lufkin
McAllen
McKinney
Mesquite
Midland
New Braunfels
North Richland Hills
Odessa
Pasadena
Plano
Richardson
Rowlett
San Antonio
Socorro
Sugar Land
Temple
Texarkana
Texas City
Waco
Weslaco

Utah
Bountiful
Layton
Logan
Murray

Ogden
Roy
Salt Lake City
Sandy
West Jordan
West Valley City

Virginia
Alexandria
Blacksburg
Chesapeake
Danville
Newport News
Norfolk
Petersburg
Virginia Beach

Washington
Bellevue
Bellingham
Bremerton
Everett
Kennewick
Kirkland
Longview
Puyallup
Redmond
Seattle
Spokane
Tacoma
Walla Walla

West Virginia
Charleston
Huntington

Wisconsin
Appleton
Beloit
Brookfield
Eau Claire
Fond Du Lac
Green Bay
Janesville
Kenosha
La Crosse
Madison
New Berlin
Oshkosh
Racine
Sheboygan
Superior
West Allis
West Bend

Wyoming
Cheyenne

Small Cities

Alabama
Bridgeport
Chickasaw
Talladega
Trussville

Arizona
San Luis
Show Low
Somerton

Arkansas
Hamburg

California
Brentwood
Calipatria
Dixon
Farmersville
Firebaugh
Half Moon Bay
Huron
Los Banos
Red Bluff

Florida
Alachua
Edgewater
Greenacres
Mount Dora
Opa-Locka

Georgia
Dawson
Forest Park
Pelham

Idaho
Rexburg

Illinois
Bridgeview
Country Club Hills
Crest Hill
Edwardsville
Gillespie
Glen Carbon
Libertyville
Madison
Morton Grove
North Aurora
Plainfield
Prospect Heights
Richton Park
Riverside
Sterling
Wauconda
Westmont
Winfield
Winthrop Harbor

Indiana
Mitchell
Petersburg

Kansas
Arkansas City
Paola
Ulysses

Kentucky
Franklin
London
Morgantown
Shelbyville

Louisiana
Haynesville
Lockport
Pineville

Maine
Brunswick
Fort Fairfield
Houlton

Massachusetts
Southampton
Wrentham

Michigan
Almont
Marshall
Menominee City
Mount Morris
Mount Pleasant

Minnesota
Lindstrom
South St. Paul
Thief River Falls
Waseca

Mississippi
Booneville

Missouri
Festus
Pevely
Pleasant Hill

New Hampshire
Pelham
Portsmouth

New Jersey
East Windsor
Little Egg Harbor
Maple Shade
Wyckoff

New Mexico
Deming

New York
Chatham
Dunkirk
Kingston
Oxford Village
Scotia
South Nyack/ Grand View

Ohio
Brook Park
Fostoria
Kenton
Mason
Middleport
Wauseon

Oklahoma
Tecumseh

Oregon
Ontario

Pennsylvania
Carbondale

South Carolina
Belton

80

South Dakota
Winner

Tennessee
Clinton

Texas
Crowley
Gladewater
Gonzales
Needville

Utah
Midvale City
Roosevelt
Spanish Fork
Springville

Washington
Chelan
Lacey
Mount Vernon
Steilacoom

Wisconsin
Fox Valley Metro
Horicon
Oregon
Verona

Wyoming
Rock Springs

Suburban Counties

Alabama
Autauga
Baldwin
Calhoun
Colbert
Dale
Jefferson
Madison

Arizona
Maricopa
Mohave
Pinal
Yuma

Arkansas
Lonoke

California
Butte
Contra Costa
Fresno
Los Angeles
Madera
Merced
Monterey
Napa
Placer
Riverside
Sacramento
San Bernardino
San Diego
San Joaquin
San Luis Obispo
San Mateo
Santa Cruz
Solano
Stanislaus
Sutter
Ventura
Yuba

Colorado
Douglas
El Paso
Jefferson
Pueblo
Weld

Delaware
New Castle

Florida
Broward
Clay
Collier
Flagler
Hillsborough
Lee
Leon
Manatee
Marion
Nassau
Okaloosa
Orange
Osceola
Palm Beach
Pasco
Polk
St. Johns
St. Lucie
Sarasota

Georgia
Bibb
Catoosa
Cherokee
Columbia
Coweta
De Kalb
Dougherty
Douglas
Henry
Jones
Paulding
Peach
Richmond
Spalding
Twiggs
Walker
Walton

Idaho
Ada
Canyon

Illinois
Boone
Cook
DuPage
Grundy
Kane
Kendall
Lake
Macon
Madison
McHenry
McLean
Ogle
Peoria
Rock Island
St. Clair
Will
Winnebago

Indiana
Allen
Clark
Delaware
St. Joseph
Tippecanoe
Warrick

Iowa
Johnson
Warren

Kansas
Butler
Harvey
Sedgwick
Wyandotte

Kentucky
Bullitt
Campbell
Daviess

Louisiana
Caddo
East Baton Rouge
Jefferson
Rapides
St. Charles
St. James
Webster

Maine
Cumberland

Maryland
Baltimore
Charles
Frederick
Harford
Howard
Montgomery

Michigan
Eaton
Genesee
Kent
Livingston
Muskegon
Ottawa
Saginaw
St. Clair
Van Buren
Washtenaw

Minnesota
Dakota
Washington

Mississippi
Harrison

Missouri
Jackson
Jefferson
Platte
St. Charles
St. Louis
Warren

Montana
Yellowstone

Nebraska
Dakota
Douglas
Lancaster

Nevada
Washoe

New Jersey
Essex
Hudson
Middlesex
Monmouth
Union
Warren

New Mexico
Dona Ana

New York
Genesee
Schenectady
Suffolk

North Carolina
Buncombe
Burke
Cabarrus
Catawba
Chatham
Cumberland
Edgecombe
Guilford
Johnston
Onslow
Pitt
Rowan
Union
Yadkin

North Dakota
Cass

Ohio
Belmont
Columbiana
Franklin
Hamilton
Licking
Medina
Miami
Montgomery
Wood

Oklahoma
Canadian
Cleveland
Creek
Garfield
Tulsa

Oregon
Jackson
Lane
Marion
Multnomah
Washington

Pennsylvania
Beaver

South Carolina
Aiken
Anderson
Edgefield
Greenville
Lexington
Richland
Spartanburg
Sumter
York

Tennessee
Hawkins
Knox
Loudon
Marion
Rutherford
Sumner

Texas
Bastrop
Brazoria
Caldwell
Cameron
Denton
Ector
El Paso
Fort Bend
Galveston
Harris
Hood
Johnson
Montgomery
Neuces
Potter
Smith
Victoria
Webb
Wilson

Utah
Davis
Salt Lake
Utah

Virginia
Arlington
Chesterfield
Fairfax
Fauquier
Loudoun
New Kent
Powhatan
Prince William
Roanoke
Spotsylvania

Washington
Clark
Franklin
King
Kitsap
Spokane
Whatcom
Yakima

West Virginia
Brooke
Cabell
Hancock
Wayne

Wisconsin
Calumet
Dane
Eau Claire
La Crosse
Milwaukee
Ozaukee
Racine
St. Croix
Washington
Waukesha

Rural Counties

Alabama
Choctaw
De Kalb
Greene
Pickens
Sumter
Talladega

Arizona
Greenlee
Yavapai

Arkansas
Chicot
Garland
Ouachita
Yell

California
Colusa
Del Norte
Humboldt
Lake
San Benito
Tehama

Colorado
Custer
Delta
Elbert

Florida
Highlands
Sumter

Georgia
Butts
Camden
Echols
Forsyth
Glynn
Gordon
Habersham
Stephens

Tift
White
Whitfield

Idaho
Bannock
Bingham
Jerome
Kootenai
Lincoln
Madison
Teton

Illinois
Williamson

Indiana
Cass
Grant
Johnson
Steuben

Kansas
Riley
Seward
Stanton

Kentucky
Marshall
Meade
Powell

Louisiana
Catahoula
Claiborne
East Carroll
Washington

Michigan
Houghton
Iosco
Iron
Marquette
Newaygo
Tuscola

Minnesota
Carlton
Itasca
Steele
Waseca
Watonwan
Wilkin

Mississippi
Bolivar
Grenada
Hancock
Jones
Lee
Scott
Tippah
Wayne

Missouri
Dent
Douglas
Howell
McDonald
Mississippi
Pike
Pulaski

Montana
Hill
Sweet Grass

Nebraska
Frontier
Thurston

Nevada
Churchill
Douglas

New Mexico
De Baca
Luna
Roosevelt

New York
Greene

North Carolina
Dare
Gates
Montgomery
Vance

North Dakota
Benson
Rolette

Ohio
Ashland
Fairfield
Gallia
Hancock
Hardin
Monroe
Tuscarawas
Wayne

Oklahoma
Craig

Oregon
Umatilla

South Carolina
Abbeville
Lancaster

South Dakota
Day
Ziebach

Tennessee
Lauderdale
Lincoln
Maury
McNairy
Roane
Tipton

Texas
Atascosa
Crane
Fayette
Kerr
Lipscomb
Medina
Robertson
Uvalde
Wise
Zapata

Utah
San Juan

Washington
Grant

West Virginia
Berkley
Marion

Wisconsin
Juneau
Manitowoc
Menominee
Richland
Vilas
Waushara

Appendix E: U.S. Regions and Divisions Used for the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey

Midwestern States

East North Central

Illinois
Indiana
Michigan
Ohio
Wisconsin

West North Central

Iowa
Kansas
Minnesota
Missouri
Nebraska
North Dakota
South Dakota

Western States

Mountain

Arizona
Colorado
Idaho
Montana
Nevada
New Mexico
Utah
Wyoming

Pacific

Alaska
California
Hawaii
Oregon
Washington

Northeastern States

New England

Connecticut
Maine
Massachusetts
New Hampshire
Rhode Island
Vermont

Middle Atlantic

New Jersey
New York
Pennsylvania

Southern States

South Atlantic

Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Maryland
North Carolina
South Carolina
Virginia
West Virginia

East South Central

Alabama
Kentucky
Mississippi
Tennessee

West South Central

Arkansas
Louisiana
Oklahoma
Texas

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Disproportionate Minority Confinement: 1997 Update. 1998, NCJ 170606 (12 pp.).

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